

# CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

ON THE

CHARACTER and ACTIONS

OF

## Alexander the Great.

Written Originally in ITALIAN

By his Serene Highness

FREDERIC AUGUSTUS,

PRINCE of BRUNSWIC.

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CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

ON THE

CHARACTER OF AATION

BY

ALFRED, THE GREAT

MANUFACTURED FOR THE BRITISH MUSEUM



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PRINCE OF WALES

1700

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1700

THE TRANSLATOR's

P R E E A C E.

**T**HE following judicious reflections were originally intended for the instruction of young princes. They are admirably calculated to prevent them from falling into those vices which will render any man contemptible, but cannot fail to make a sovereign really odious. We may, however, consider this treatise as an useful lesson of morality, not only to such as are designed for the important offices of government, but likewise to men of a private capacity, and especially those of younger years. The same passions which render the former such dangerous enemies to their own happiness, and to that of

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the community, are the sources of most of the miseries and misfortunes which befall the latter. Intemperance and pride are alike destructive both to the one and to the other. They not only make bad princes and bad commanders, but bad husbands and parents, bad children and subjects, bad masters and servants, and bad neighbours and friends. All the difference is, that in princes the unhappy effects of these vices are more extensive than in other men, and, of consequence, they must be attended with more public disgrace, and afford the sufferers larger room for complaint.

The character and actions of Alexander furnish a fine opportunity of displaying the consequences of pride and sensual indulgence in their pro-

## P R E F A C E. V

proper colors. With the most extraordinary natural talents, and an unbounded generosity of temper; this famous conqueror was hurried on by his passions into the most scandalous and the most brutal extravagances! These have been judiciously pointed out, and censured with all the severity they deserve, by the princely author of the following critical reflections:—a plan which may prove the more useful to the young reader, as it will let him see, that vice is in its own nature so detestable, that neither rank, capacity, nor fortune, nor even empire itself, can hide its deformity, or screen it from the lash of public odium.

But the following treatise may be of still farther service, as it will instruct young people how they are

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to judge of men and characters from such histories as may be occasionally put into their hands. It is very natural for a person, who hath seen but little of the world, and whose judgment is not arrived to maturity, to look upon every thing which hath been done by a great man as a justifiable action. Unacquainted as he is with the proper limits of virtue and vice, and fond of every thing which may seem to countenance the intemperate indulgence of his passions, he will be apt to mistake rashness for courage, artifice and treachery for good policy, luxury and debauchery for a becoming gaiety of manners, pride for true greatness of mind, and inhumanity and revenge for a laudable resentment of injuries:—especially when

he

he finds these vices exemplified, as he too frequently will, in the lives of men, who have been distinguished for the opposite virtues. Too hasty to examine coolly into the merit of every action which is related, he will often approve what he ought to condemn; and too much attached to the gratification of youthful passions, he will presently imitate what his ignorance hath once approved. If, therefore, the cultivation of their morals is one essential, and, perhaps, the most important branch of the education of youth, I should think it would not be at all amiss if this treatise was to be put into the hands of such young gentlemen, as may have occasion to read the history of Alexander in the course of their classical learning,

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CRITICAL REFLECTIONS  
ON THE  
CHARACTER and ACTIONS

OF

Alexander the Great.

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CHAP. I.

*The character of Alexander the Great, and  
the concern he discovered at the news  
of his father's victories.*

LEXANDER the Great

A was a prince in whom the  
brightest qualities were blend-  
ed with as remarkable defects. The  
ground-work of his character was truly

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## 2 CRITICAL REFLECTIONS, &c.

excellent; but it was frequently blemished by those vices which sprang from his passions, and, above all, from a false ambition. In his younger years he had made considerable improvements under the lessons of his preceptor Aristotle, whom Philip King of Macedon, and the father of Alexander, had invited from the city Stagira, to instruct his son in philosophy. But, alas! notwithstanding his great natural docility, how soon did the ambitious Alexander forget the precepts of his master! It must, however, be acknowledged that he discovered the noblest sentiments of generosity and goodness upon all occasions, and in a manner which bespoke an elevated genius; and that he might have passed for the greatest prince upon earth, if a frantic ambition had not hurried him into the greatest extravagancies

## ON ALEXANDER THE GREAT. 5

gancies. Such, in a few words, is the character of this renowned conqueror.

In his earliest youth he was full of ambition. He was always observed to shed tears when his father had made a conquest or gained a victory. "Ah! "unfortunate wretch that I am," (would he say to his youthful companions,) "if my father continues to be thus successful, I myself shall find nothing to conquer!" This sentiment, with which our hero was so warmly affected, is at once deserving of our commendation and our censure. It was very commendable in Alexander, when he had scarcely outgrown his infancy, to be so desirous of distinguishing himself from his cotemporary princes, who used to pass away their days in luxury and effeminate softness, after the example of the kings of Persia.

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4 CRITICAL REFLECTIONS, &c.

But was it not likewise a great mistake to imagine, that the only method for a king to distinguish himself, is to extirpate a part of the human species, to make thousands miserable, and to shed the innocent blood of whole nations? With what abundant reason might the race of men bewail their fate, if all those who are placed upon the throne should think in the same manner! The whole world would presently be depopulated! A sovereign who hath the slendereft feelings of humanity will always regard war as a misfortune. He may render himself respectable, and acquire a sufficient share of glory by governing his subjects with discretion and equity, and conforming his actions to the laws of nature and reason. It is only when a war is unavoidable, that he should think it glorious to distinguish

him-

himself by military atchievements. In that case he doth nothing but obey the dictates of his duty.

C H A P. II.

*The conduct of Alexander, when he was very young, to the ambassadors of the king of Persia.*

THE sublime genius of Alexander, his uncommon good sense, and the contempt he entertained for every thing which was trifling and frivolous, discovered themselves in his tenderest age. When the ambassadors, who had been sent to Philip by the king of Persia, obtained an audience of Alexander, they were astonished to hear the young prince, (instead of asking them questions about the superb gardens of Se-

### 5 CRITICAL REFLECTIONS, &c.

miramis, the magnificent edifices, the riches and the grandeur of the Persian court,) turn the whole conversation upon the road to be taken to go into Asia, and upon the forces of the king of Persia, the conduct he observed towards his enemies, the place where he usually posted himself in time of battle, and the principles he acted upon in the government of his dominions. They were surprised to find in a prince of Alexander's age such uncommon strength of genius, and such soundness of judgment. "This young prince," said they, (comparing him with Artaxerxes;) "this young prince is really a great one, but ours is only a rich one:"—intimating, by this expression, how little and contemptible their own sovereign appeared to them in comparison with Alexander.

Henry

Henry Prince of Wales, and eldest son of James I. King of England, discovered the same greatness of mind on a similar occasion. When the French ambassador was at his father's court, and came to pay him his compliments, he found the prince very busily engaged in his military exercises. " Go, Sir, " (said he) and tell your master in what manner you have found me employed." This prince had a most excellent judgment, and as good a heart. He had every quality which could render him worthy of a throne, and his genius bore a striking resemblance to that of Alexander. If the world had not been deprived of his virtues by an untimely death, it is my opinion that he would have acquired a greater name than the conqueror of Asia.

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The conduct of Alexander towards the Persian ambassadors, is worthy of the highest eulogies. It may teach a young prince, who is designed for the throne, with what objects he ought to be conversant, and with what diligence he should embrace and seek after opportunities of instructing himself in what may contribute to the good of his country. This passage of history may likewise convince us, that it is not riches, but true genius and elevation of soul, which render a prince respectable. Unhappy is that sovereign of whom we are forced to say, with the ambassadors of Persia, when we compare him with another; “ This is really a great king, but ours is only a rich one.” Riches entitle no man to esteem. Every body is sensible that they are the gift of fortune.

CHAP.

C H A P. III.

*The harty courage of Alexander in breaking his horse Bucephalus.*

ALEXANDER's breaking Bucephalus was a proof rather of his discernment than of his courage. The prince observing that the horse startled at his own shadow, turned him about in such a manner, that not seeing it any longer, he suffered himself to be mounted without difficulty. All who were present admired Alexander. Even his father was astonished at his resolution; because nobody took notice that a slight remark was the true spring of an action so very daring in appearance. This, however, is the manner in which

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TO CRITICAL REFLECTIONS, &c.  
the fact hath been related by Quintus  
Curtius.

## CHAP. IV.

*Alexander saves the life of his father.*

**A**LEXANDER seeing his father in imminent danger of losing his life in a battle, he instantly threw himself before him, and protected him with his body. This action can never be enough commended, and is alone sufficient to clear him from any suspicions of being concerned in the conspiracy against Philip. Alexander, in this instance, not only acquitted himself of the most sacred of all duties, in prolonging the days of him, who next to the Almighty was the author of his life and being; but he likewise discovered, that he was animated with

a noble desire of acquiring the most solid glory. For what could be more glorious than to save the life of such an illustrious father? It was both necessary and glorious for the great sovereign of Macedon to expose himself on this occasion. We are told by some historians, that Philip conceived a jealousy against his son for this gallant action. If what they say be matter of fact, it is not at all to Philip's credit. But at the same time it greatly heightens the glory of Alexander, to have performed such an action as could raise the jealousy of his own father.

## C H A P. V.

*The contempt which Alexander discovered for Paris, and the honors he rendered to the sepulchre of Achilles.*

WHEN Alexander was on his march through the country in which were the celebrated ruins of the city of Troy, he was presented with the harp of Paris. "I set but little value," (said the magnanimous monarch as he beheld it;) "I set but little value on this despis- cable and worthless instrument of effeminacy and pleasure. I had much rather find the harp of Achilles, on which that hero resounded the praises of illustrious men, with the very same hand which in action surpassed their exploits." Then ad-

van-

vancing to the tomb of Achilles, he perfumed it with sweet ointments, and on the top of it he placed a crown of gold.

The words I have cited are truly worthy of a great prince and a real hero. But there is a particular majesty in the honors which Alexander rendered to the memory of Achilles. A true hero will always take pleasure in contemplating the virtues, the sublime qualities, and the achievements of those who have gone before him in the career of great exploits. By this means he excites within his own breast an emulation to tread in their steps. Men of a little genius and of ordinary merit are never willing to render their esteem to the most brilliant qualities which they remark in other people: on the contrary, they endeavor to lessen them, and industriously

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ously undervalue what they cannot equal. They think to heighten their own worth, while in fact they only sink it by a conduct so extremely contemptible. Nothing can be more opposite to true heroism. The noblest victory we can gain over our own inclinations, is to have the courage to admire what is great and excellent in men of the same rank with ourselves. No person can boast a better title to the name of a hero, than he who knows how to submit his passions to the laws of equity, and to compel his own personal vanity to respect the merit which he discovers in another. There is nothing in a victory of this kind which resembles the hazard of a military combat, in which it is possible for the most arrant poltroon to get the better of an unfortunate hero. Alexander, then, in the instance

stance before us, hath given us a noble specimen of those sentiments which render a great man really estimable. His conduct is a proof that he thoroughly understood and felt what true heroism means.

## C H A P. VI.

*The reflection of Alexander upon the condition of sovereign princes.*

ALEXANDER once observed, "That kings should always perform good actions, and always expect to be blamed for them." This reflection is partly true, and partly false. It is true, that good actions are the principal circumstances by which a prince should be distinguished from a private person. That sovereign must be extremely ungrateful to the Almighty, who

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who can renounce such a glorious prerogative. He would set a wretched example to his subjects, who will not fail to say; — “ If our prince doth not think it his duty to perform good actions, the obligation upon us, who have infinitely less power and opportunity, must be extremely trifling.” As to the censure Alexander speaks of, every prince must expect his share of it. If a sovereign bestows a favor which hath been equally merited by two of his subjects, and of which the one and the other believe themselves alike deserving, it is certain that he will be severely censured by him who loses the recompence he expected. But the censure will appear extremely unjust, if we reflect that it is not always in a sovereign’s power to reward every body who may deserve it. We might add, that

that in all cases of this nature, a man complains of his prince, not so much from any disapprobation of his conduct, as from a disgust at his own disappointment. But is it not, after all, a general truth, that princes are more commended than censured? With what a swarm of flatterers is a sovereign surrounded, who are always ready to applaud him, not only for the merest trifles, but for actions which are notoriously culpable, and reflect the vilest dishonour on regal majesty. How many authors have lavished their commendations on those passages of a prince's life, which ought to be erased from the pages of history. In the tenth tome of P. Daniel's history of France, the highest eulogies are bestowed on Francis I. for condemning his protestant subjects to the flames!

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18 CRITICAL REFLECTIONS, &c.

To conclude this chapter, if a prince would appear worthy of the crown he wears, and discharge the duties of his station, he will be obliged to perform good actions. This he may certainly do without much difficulty: for he can never be at a loss for opportunities, and may assure himself that he will always be more commended for it than censured.

C H A P. VII.

*The races at the Olympic games.*

THE King of Macedon once took it into his head to dispute the racer's prize at the Olympic games; but he missed his mark, and was not able to win the prize he contended for. I cannot say that this action of Alexander, that Alexander having been asked, why he did not contend at the Olympic games: replied, I would. I used to contend with every

ander greatly pleases me. It must certainly be acknowledged, that exercise, and even laborious exercise, may be very proper for a king and the commander of an army, as a means to preserve him from effeminacy,—a vice which will equally debilitate the powers both of the mind and the body. If the king of Macedon had no other design but this, we may say with a safe conscience, that his method of putting it into execution was extremely injudicious. It was very unseemly in Alexander to enter the lists, and thus put himself upon a level with persons of the meanest rank, and condescend to become a spectacle to his whole army, and a numerous throng of the common people. All persons have not the same strength of body. This difference is observable among kings as

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well as among other men. But in bodily vigor, the lower class of people, who are inured to labor and hardships, have generally speaking the advantage over kings, who are taken up with more lofty concerns. If, therefore, in things of this nature, a sovereign should enter into a contest with the meaner sort of persons, the whole honor will certainly fall to the latter: and, then, how severe must be the prince's mortification? Whenever a monarch humbles himself in such a thoughtless manner, his merits are no longer to be decided by his fellow kings, but by those capricious judges the common people. If, therefore, he hath the least spark of ambition, he will be careful never to put himself upon an equality with persons of an inferior condition. For the same reason a

prince

prince of understanding will scorn to waste his time in the pursuit of that trifling glory which is derived from such unimportant qualities as can add nothing to the lustre of the royal name. Thus, for example, it must be allowed that Painting is a fine art: but if a monarch should place his chief merit in an accomplishment of this kind, what could be more ridiculous? It might, perhaps, be worth his while to apply himself to the study of it now and then by way of amusement; but it would manifestly be a blemish to his character to make profession of it. With what ridicule did Nero overwhelm himself by appearing on the stage? Or what sensible Frenchman can excuse the folly of Lewis XIV. in assuming the character of a comedian? A sovereign should

cautiously avoid every thing which may lessen him in the eyes of the public. Clemency, affability, and a compassion which renders him always accessible to the unfortunate, will never deprive him of that respectful submission which is due to his rank. But he may lose it by a single act of indiscretion like those I have been relating.

## C H A P. VIII.

*What Alexander said of Aristotle.*

THE great sovereign of Macedon once observed, " That he was more obliged to Aristotle than to his own father, because that Philosopher by his precepts had rendered him truly worthy of the life which he had

“ had received from Philip.” I am highly pleased with this expression of Alexander’s gratitude to his master. It is a fine thing in a prince to be thus sensible of the services which have been done him; and especially of that valuable kind of services we are speaking of. It is by the care of his preceptors that a young prince is rendered worthy of the name he bears. Besides,—what task can be more difficult than to inspire noble sentiments and virtuous principles into creatures, who, notwithstanding the rational faculties they are possessed of, are governed by so many passions, and so powerfully influenced by the foward and capricious humours of the age in which the cultivation of their manners is undertaken, that they rather resemble peevish infants or ani-

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mals devoid of reason, than persons who are ripening into manhood.

The sentiment in the above-mentioned apophthegm is extremely well-grounded. The existence for which this hero was indebted, under God, to his father Philip, would have been of little service to him, if he had not met with an Aristotle, to instruct him how to profit by the advantage of being the son of so illustrious a parent. It would have been doubly dishonourable in Alexander not to have coveted to approve himself such a son as should be worthy of the great Philip. Every son should take a pride in imitating the good qualities of his father. But the son of Philip would have cut a figure most remarkably contemptible, if he had not walked in the footsteps of the great man to whom he owed his birth.

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A prince of ordinary merit, who succeeds another of very weak abilities, will make a tolerable appearance to his subjects when compared with his predecessor. But when the place of a great and heroic sovereign is filled up by a successor who is possessed of many useful and even shining qualities, though in a less eminent degree, the merits of the latter will appear trifling in comparison of his who filled the throne before him.

We may add, that the above-cited words of Alexander flattered Philip in the most delicate manner. For we cannot help imagining that he must have had a high opinion of his father's merit, to think himself under such obligations to Aristotle for rendering him worthy to be called his son. In a word, this sentiment of the king of Macedon  
is

is an extreme fine one. It affords a manifest proof that he had a noble and an elevated soul.

## C H A P. IX.

*Alexander conversing with Diogenes.*

WHEN Alexander was passing through Athens he found Diogenes in his tub. As he had heard a great deal of talk about him as a man of a very singular character, he had a mind to have some discourse with him, and accordingly proposed the question, —  
“ What favor would be most worthy  
“ of his acceptance ? ” “ The only fa-  
“ vor I desire,” replied the Philoso-  
pher, “ is that you would be kind  
“ enough to stand out of the way, and  
“ let me see the sun.” The king of

Ma-

Macedon took his leave of him, not a little astonished at his answ<sup>r</sup>.

Alexander, upon this occasion, discovered a strong curiosity to inform himself of the sentiments of a man, who passed for a great oddity. This curiosity is very commendable in a prince. It may throw in his way men of a frank and open character, who will not scruple to say every thing they think, and tell him truths which nobody else would presume to mention. How many instances may we meet with both in ancient and in modern history of princes, who by mingling with their subjects, under favor of some disguise or another, have learned truths which they never thought of before.

I am mightily pleased with Alexander for desiring to oblige Diogenes: but I am equally pleased with Diogenes, for

for supporting his character, when he might have demanded what favor he pleased of the great conqueror of Asia.

We may farther infer from this passage, that men may content themselves with a little, and yet be extremely happy. It is true, indeed, that nobody, except Diogenes, could accommodate himself to that singular kind of life which he is reported to have led; and I must frankly own, that I should regard myself as the unhappiest of mortals, if I was necessitated to follow his example. It would be a matter of bad consequence, if all the world was of the cynic's way of thinking. But there are too many persons to whom I could wish it as a real blessing. I mean those, who by an excess of luxury and extravagance reduce numbers of their fellow-creatures to perish through want.

The

ON ALEXANDER THE GREAT. 29

The astonishment of the king of Macedon, upon hearing the blunt answer of Diogenes, was extremely natural. No characters could be more opposite to each other, than those of the prince and the philosopher. The former could not have been happy, even if he had conquered the whole world: but the latter was not only contented with his tub, but disdained every other advantage, except that of viewing the sun at full liberty. Both the one and the other was a great man in his own way: Alexander for his ambition to be the first man upon earth, (an ambition which is very natural to a great mind;) and Diogenes for the simplicity of his manners. Several historians have informed us, that Alexander frankly owned upon this occasion, " that if he had not been Alexander, he would

" have

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“ have wished to be Diogenes.” It was very suitable to the character of this prince, to desire either to be every thing or nothing. It must be confessed, that he had some reason for it. In his circumstances, he must either have appeared a great man in all respects, or have lived in the world altogether unnoticed and unknown.

This saying of Alexander is nearly the same, as that noted one of Cæsar,—  
“ I had rather be the first man in a  
“ paltry village, than the second man  
“ in Rome.”

CHAP.

## C H A P. X.

*What Alexander said to the Athenians.*

WHEN Alexander came to <sup>A</sup>thenes, did it become him to say to the inhabitants of that celebrated city, — “ O Athenians, to what a multitude of dangers and fatigues have <sup>do not say</sup> <sup>he ever made</sup> <sup>this speech</sup> <sup>to the Athenians</sup> <sup>in march he</sup> <sup>made this</sup> exposed myself, in order to merit a painful <sup>exclamation</sup> <sup>O Athenians</sup> <sup>which means</sup> <sup>only. he</sup> <sup>armed at a</sup> <sup>degree of</sup> <sup>Glory, worthy</sup> <sup>to let us go</sup> <sup>move by</sup> <sup>them</sup> <sup>Athenians at</sup> <sup>that time</sup> your praises ! ” I acknowledge indeed, that these words were very flattering to the Athenians : but I must say, at the same time, that I can scarcely think them worthy of the king of Macedon. I do not believe it to be true, <sup>armed at a</sup> <sup>that Alexander ever expressed himself</sup> <sup>in this manner.</sup> But if it is not a mere fable, Alexander probably had a mind to compliment the Athenians, by letting <sup>move by</sup> <sup>them</sup> <sup>Athenians at</sup> <sup>that time</sup>

them know the high value he set on their eulogies. But the compliment is a little too high-flown: and for that reason, it would sound infinitely better in the mouth of some theatrical hero to make a declaration of this kind to his mistress, than in the mouth of such a king as Alexander. Were it possible that the king of Macedon could have uttered such words seriously, they would have been injurious to his glory. For he must, in this case, have made so many important conquests, performed so many daring exploits, and lavished away the innocent lives of thousands, who, for a trifling stipend, had devoted themselves to his service, with no other view than to be applauded by the Athenians, a people who (it is possible) were but incompetent judges of the real greatness

of his military atchievements. I cannot say that I have any esteem for a prince who performs great actions, only with a view to be applauded for them. It is, indeed, a great advantage to the public that such princes, whose characters are not naturally of the most elevated turn, will notwithstanding perform many noble things, from the sole motive of glory, and the applause they expect for their pains. But are they worthy to be compared with those who perform good actions from a principle of honor, and because they are convinced that they are called to it by their duty? A desire of glory may urge the former to many extravagant exertions of valor: but the latter will never willingly do any thing which is contrary to their duty, but pay a constant and an inviolable regard to the sacred engage-

## D ments

ments of their station. Let us consider it, therefore, in what light we will, I cannot say that I am at all pleased with this *bon mot* of Alexander. I am very willing to pass it over as a mere compliment. If it was spoken seriously, it was altogether unworthy to be uttered by the lips of royalty.

## C H A P. XI.

*Of Homer's coming to life again, and the  
casket kept by Alexander to contain the  
heart of that Poet.*

*these reflections are too ridiculous to deserve a comment.* **W**HEN Alexander saw one of his couriers, whom he had sent upon some message, return sooner than he expected, he asked him, “ Whether and *his long* Homer was come to life again, and “ if

“ if it was to bring him such an agreeable piece of news, that he had returned with such dispatch ?” I am really at a loss for the true meaning of these noted words of the king of Macedon. Perhaps, he spoke them seriously ; or, it may be, we should only consider them as a turn of pleasantry. I cannot, however, persuade myself that we ought to look upon them in the former light. For is it possible that such a king, as Alexander was, could ever imagine, that a man should come to life again, who was dead and rotten many years before himself was either born or thought of ? I am rather of opinion, that he only meant them as a turn of pleasantry. But I am still at a loss to comprehend, how a king, who had so many important affairs upon his mind, could always be thinking of his favorite

*sorted*

D 2

Homer.

Homer. It must indeed be allowed, that it is very commendable in a prince to respect men of learning and genius, and distinguish them above the rest of mankind. But I should have been much better pleased with Alexander, if instead of talking about Homer, he had enquired whether the enemy was advancing, or whether the man had any intelligence to communicate, which might be of service to the state : he would then have discovered that the public good and the welfare of his subjects was always uppermost in his thoughts. Without pretending to censure the king of Macedon, I cannot help remarking, that he was fond of passing for the great protector of men of learning and genius. This character is beyond dispute a very glorious one. But is it not a great deal better

better to deserve such a character in reality, than merely to make a shew of it, and take such a world of pains to preserve nothing but the bare appearance of it? And are we not tempted to suspect, that a man who thus openly assumes the title, is indeed sufficiently sensible of the esteem which is due to the sciences, but at the same time that he would fain persuade the world that he hath a much finer taste for them than he can justly pretend to have?

I shall here present my reader with another anecdote of Alexander. We are told, that he reserved a very costly casket to inclose the heart of Homer. I am far from censuring the king of Macedon for the wonderful esteem which he discovered for this celebrated poet. On the contrary, I greatly commend him. The poems of Homer, ex-

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clusive of their real merit, might furnish out the most useful instruction for Alexander in more respects than one. I am likewise infinitely pleased with the king of Macedon, for being capable, from the bare reading of an author's performances, of conceiving an esteem for his person, though he had never seen him. This stricture of his conduct is extremely different from that which we have related in the beginning of the chapter. In the former I discover something which is perfectly incomprehensible; whereas the latter is only a lively expression of Alexander's strong attachment to Homer.

CHAP.

and preserves from art to old age now  
to flourish and to flourish again. And  
now to **C H A P T. XII.** and this  
book itself is not of need even though it  
*Alexander preserves the house of Pindar*  
*hastily in the storm of Thebes.*

**W**HEN Alexander entered Thebes  
he left the house of Pindar un-  
touched, out of respect to his extra-  
ordinary merit. I am delighted to be-  
hold the king of Macedon making a  
difference between persons who had  
worth, and those who had none. It is  
always commendable in a prince, or in  
a general, to shew the world, especial-  
ly upon occasions of this nature, what  
is due to such persons, who have dis-  
tinguished themselves from the rest of  
mankind by their estimable qualities.  
But a prince who, like Alexander,

was capable of the most elevated conduct, ought naturally to have reflected within himself, what an heroic action it would have been to have spared the whole city out of compassion to the poor inhabitants, and to have yielded to the dictates of true grandeur, what he thought he could not handsomely refuse to the pleas of particular merit. Besides, instead of saving only the house of Pindar, I cannot conceive why Alexander might not as well have preserved the whole city, to honor the memory of such an illustrious captain as Epaminondas. One would think that a warrior, like the king of Macedon, should have been more sensibly affected with the merits of that celebrated champion of the Thebans, who so well deserved to have been the savior of his country after his death, than with

with the merits of a mere poet such as Pindar. But without laboring to put an ill-natured construction upon this part of Alexander's conduct, we may reasonably imagine, that one of the principal motives which engaged him to it, was a desire to have the poets for his friends;—a very commendable desire, but which we must suppose to have been connected with the idea of having his name immortalized, and of engaging the poets to mention him upon all occasions with the highest eulogies. I will not insist upon it, that this was the principle of Alexander's generosity: but appearances naturally lead me to think so. Be the case how it will, the action in itself is deserving of the greatest commendation.

## C H A P. XIII.

*The battle of Granicus, and Alexander's greatness of soul after the victory.*

THE conqueror of Asia displayed his courage in the most brilliant manner at the famous battle of Granicus. He ventured to pass a river, whose opposite banks were defended by the best troops in the whole army of Darius. He looked upon this enterprize as a mere trifle, telling those who endeavoured to dissuade him from it, " That the Hellespont would blush for shame, if after his passage over that, he should hesitate to cross a little brook." Alexander discovered in this battle an uncommon share of valor. He was several times in danger

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of

of losing his life, and he certainly would have lost it if Clitus, whom he afterwards thought worthy to be made his confidant, had not saved him. The king of Macedon, with his own hand, slew Spithridates, who was one of the principal commanders in the army of Darius. Alexander did not act very prudently, or rather he did not act like a true patriot, in exposing his own person in such an extraordinary manner. He might very reasonably imagine, that if he had happened to be taken off, it would have endangered the entire defeat of his army; for the disagreement of his generals about the command, and the consternation of his troops, would have given Darius an easy victory. The battle of Lutzen is an instance too extraordinary to serve for a precedent: then, indeed, the soldiery preserved

their

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their courage; though Gustavus Adolphus, the gallant king of Sweden, and the great deliverer of the protestants, lost his life in the very hottest of the action. A spirit of vengeance, with which the men were all inspired, procured them a victory, which such a catastrophe should naturally have taken from them.

It gives me pain to reflect that, upon this occasion, Alexander was under a necessity of killing Spithridates with his own hand. It appears to me to be unworthy of a sovereign to pollute his hands with the blood of his enemies. Those who fight under his orders are the properest persons to execute the strokes which he ought only to direct. It must sink him beneath his dignity to perform the office of a private soldier.

After

After the battle was over, Alexander gave orders that the Greek officers, who had lost their lives in the service of Darius, should be interred with all the customary solemnities. The Greeks who were taken prisoners he put in irons, that he might afterwards have them punished as they deserved for fighting against their country. But the Thebans he sent home, because they had acted against their duty, not so much out of choice as from necessity. He sent to Athens three hundred bucklers to be deposited in the temple of Minerva, with the following inscription. "Alexander the son of Philip, and all the Greeks, excepting the Lacedæmonians, took these spoils from the barbarians of Asia." The conduct of Alexander towards his enemies, in causing them to be honorably buried, was

worthy

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worthy of a great prince. Nothing can be more scandalous, than to take revenge upon our enemies after they are dead. I am likewise highly pleased with Alexander for making a difference between the Thebans and the rest of the Greeks. It was perfectly agreeable to the equity of this illustrious prince, to excuse those from punishment who had been reduced by the misfortunes of war, to a necessity of doing every thing which the enemy was pleased to require of them.

The inscription which was fixed up at Athens in the temple of Minerva, doth honor to the memory of a prince of the king of Macedon's character. It shews, that he attributed his good success to the assistance of the Greeks, and not solely to his own bravery and *valour* *prowess.*

prowess. The author I have followed informs us, that the design of Alexander in acting after this disinterested manner was--“ that by thus sharing the credit of the victory amongst the Greeks, he might render them more obedient to his orders upon any future occasion, and at the same time condemn the haughtiness of the Lacedæmonians, who having separated themselves from the rest of the states of Greece, could have no pretensions to any part of the honor.” He likewise discovered upon this occasion, that he made but little account of those gawdy, glittering trifles, which luxury alone recommends to our esteem; and, at the same time, he convinced the world that he had the noblest sentiments of respect and tenderness for his mother Olympias, by mak-

ing her a present of all the gold and silver plate, and of the purple robes and furniture, with every thing else of the same nature, which he found in the camp of the Persians.

## C H A P. XIV.

*The religious honors which Alexander paid to Minerva after gaining the battle of Granicus.*

AFTER the battle of Granicus, Alexander repaired to the temple of Minerva, and rendered her thanks for the many favorable presages, and the great assistance she had given him in so important and so dangerous a war. This conduct is a real honor to his memory; because it is a proof that

he

he had some sentiments of religion, and that he acknowledged that the advantages he had gained were not to be wholly ascribed to his own prowess, but to the assistance of the supreme power. Cyrus, the great king of Persia, always used to invoke the Gods before he began an engagement, and to return them thanks as soon as he was master of the field. Though Alexander was a pagan prince, his example may instruct many Christian princes in what manner they ought to behave themselves under the same circumstances. We should never forget, that there is above us an Almighty Being, to whom we owe our existence, and whose power can reduce us in a single moment to our original nothing. Our conduct would be extremely inconsiderate, if we should place our whole confidence in our own strength; — we, who

are nothing more than the feeble instruments of his awful will, who is the most perfect, and the greatest of beings. Every prince should remember, that his fortune is entirely at the disposal of the great sovereign of the universe, who can as easily humble the most powerful, as he can exalt the weakest to the highest summit of prosperity and honor. To attain to such a distinguished degree of elevation, or at least to render ourselves worthy of it, we should receive all the favors of heaven, with the most humble gratitude, and always render thanks to the Almighty for assisting us with his powerful aid, in comparison of which our own ability is no greater than that of the feeblest reptile, when opposed to the most terrible thing in nature. But this idea is a very imperfect expression

of the infinite disproportion between human weakness, and the uncontrollable power of the Deity.

### C H A P. XV.

*The honors which were rendered by Alexander to the statue of Theodectes.*

WHEN Alexander came to the city of Phaselus, where he halted for some time, he found a statue which had been set up by the inhabitants in honor of Theodectes. One day, after enjoying himself in the company of his friends at an entertainment, he went with them and danced round the statue, and adorned it with chaplets of flowers, in memory of the friendship which he had entertained for Theodectes in his youth. It was a proof of the excellent character of Alexander, not to

be unmindful of those who had been received into the number of his friends in his younger years ; but, on the contrary, to honor them with the most public and distinguished marks of his tenderness. It is no uncommon thing to meet with princes and private persons, who when they have been raised to any brilliant situation, can forget those without a blush, who in their youth were ranked among their friends. This is a mark of a worthless character, which requires no farther evidence to confirm it. If I have found a person, whose fine qualities have rendered him worthy of my tenderest esteem, that esteem should never alter with my condition, to whatever height of elevation the hand of Providence may afterwards exalt me. I should make myself very contemptible, if I should measure the respect which I

owe

owe him, rather by my own situation in life, than by the genuine principles of reason and morality. But those who behave in this manner, seldom fail in the end to undergo the same mortifying treatment which they have used towards others:—for when they have once discovered themselves, they make every body cautious of being concerned with such ungenerous friends. The conduct, therefore, of Alexander, in preserving himself from such a despicable foible, well comports with the character of a great sovereign.

## C H A P. XVI.

*Alexander adores the true God.*

WHEN the king of Macedon drew near Jerusalem, Jaddeus the high-priest, attended by the rest of his brethren, and the whole body of the Hebrew people, advanced from the holy city to meet him. Alexander dismounted from his horse, and after adoring the Name of the true God, which was engraven on a plate of gold on the high-priest's tiara, he received Jaddeus himself with the most honorable demonstrations of respect. The whole army was astonished at this condescending action of the son of Philip, and even Parmenio could not refrain from asking him,

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him, “ Why he paid so much ho-  
“ nor to a religion so very different  
“ from his own ; especially when he re-  
“ flected, what a foul disgrace it would  
“ have been, in so great a king, to re-  
“ ceive even the highest testimonies of  
“ respect, from such a paltry contemp-  
“ tible nation as the Jews ? ” By way  
of answer, Alexander informed him of  
a dream which had happened to him  
some time before, in which a person of  
the most venerable aspect presented  
himself to his view, and bade him fol-  
low him into Asia to overturn the ex-  
tensive empire of the Persians. When  
he afterwards saw the high-priest, the  
resemblance which he observed between  
that pontiff and this venerable person,  
was so exact, that he bethought him-  
self of his dream immediately.

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From this passage of history we may infer, that the Almighty can make use of the most feeble instruments for the execution of his purposes, and when and how he pleases, turn the hearts of the most powerful princes upon earth. He had promised the Hebrews to assist them upon all occasions with his mighty arm, and to suffer no one to have the presumption to attack them. For the accomplishment of this promise, and the preservation of his chosen people, the Almighty only presented to Alexander in a dream the appearance of a man, who bore some likeness to the Jewish high-priest, and who assured him, that he should conquer the Persian empire. It was directly opposite to our hero's way of thinking, to suffer laws to be prescribed to him by other people, and much more so to submit to the re-

ligious precepts of a nation, who were universally despised. It could therefore be nothing but the hand of the Almighty which led Alexander to behave in the manner we have related upon this memorable occasion. I cannot, however, persuade myself, that what he did in the case before us should be considered as any part of his merit: because he acknowledged to his friend Parmenio, as we have already observed, that his dream was the sole inducement.

## C H A P. XVII.

*Alexander cuts in two the famous Gordian knot.*

**W**HEN Alexander led his army into Phrygia, he instantly marched to the capital, which was called Gordium.

dium. After making himself master of the city, he entered the temple of Jupiter, where he found the chariot of Gordius, the father of Midas, which differed in nothing from an ordinary chariot, but in the fame of its yoke, the cord of which was tied in such a number of knots, so very artfully intermingled together, that no eye could perceive either where they begun or where they ended. As it was reported among the inhabitants of the country, that whosoever could untie this knot, should obtain the sovereignty of Asia, Alexander resolved to attempt it, that the presage might be accomplished in himself: but not being able to succeed, he drew his sword and cut the cord in two. This action of the son of Philip, is generally applauded as a proof of his great capacity, Per-  
haps,

haps, an ordinary genius might have had the same thought: but he would scarcely have imagined that this method of undoing the knot could fulfill the prophecy. Upon this occasion Alexander doth not appear to me, to have discovered as much judgment as I could have wished. For could he really be so weak as to persuade himself, that by defeating the intricacy of the Gordian knot, he should ensure the conquest of Asia? If we excuse our hero for giving way to such a superstitious notion, it must be merely in consideration of his being a pagan, and living in an age when oracles were in the highest credit. Besides, it should have been remembered, that the oracle promised the conquest of Asia to him who should untie the knot: so that, in fact, Alexander acted contrary to the

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the true meaning of the prophecy in cutting the cord asunder with his sword. As he made use of force, where the oracle demanded nothing but address, he could have no authority from that quarter to promise himself that he should be the conqueror of Asia, though he really proved to be so in the event.

CHAP. XVIII.

*Alexander receives false intelligence, that his physician Philip had turned traitor.*

WHEN the conqueror of Asia lay dangerously ill of a disorder, which was occasioned by his bathing in the Cydnus, and the whole army was in the greatest pain for his life, he could find no body who was bold enough

enough to undertake the cure, except Philip the physician, who having contracted a familiarity with this prince, when he was scarcely past his infancy, had a very singular regard for him. While Philip was exerting all his skill, to save the life of our hero, the latter received a letter from Parmenio, his favorite officer, to advertise him, that this physician being corrupted by the presents of Darius, and by the promises of that prince to give him his own sister in marriage, had engaged to poison him. Alexander, who was not a little alarmed at this advice, passed his time between fear and hope. But, when he was to take the draught which Philip had prepared for him, the magnanimous king of Macedon received the bowl from the hands of his physician with the most heroic resolution. Then drink-  
ing.

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ing off the medicine, at the same instant he gave Philip the letter; taking care to view him as narrowly as possible: the whole time he was reading it, that he might discover whether he betrayed any marks of confusion in his countenance. <sup>or</sup> But, happily for Alexander, his physician was an honest man.

This action of the great king of Macedonia, though in fact it was a piece of rashness, bespeaks a prince who was deserving of the crown he wore. It was, however, a very inconsiderate step, thus to risk his life without occasion. It was not in the least impossible that Darius might seek an opportunity to rid himself of such a dangerous and such a fatal enemy as Alexander: nor, on the other hand, was it impossible that the integrity of Philip himself might have been corrupted by

the

the flattering hopes of espousing the sister of so great a monarch, and receiving an ample fortune over and above, as the recompence of his crime. But, after all, this temerity of Alexander reflects an honor upon his memory. It argues a noble and an elevated soul, which could not conceive it possible, that even his enemy should seek to deliver himself from a formidable conqueror, by having recourse to such measures, as appeared to him to be the most vile and detestable, which the most inveterate malice could suggest. The conduct of the king of Macedon towards Philip, is an instance of the same greatness of mind. He would not harbour the least suspicion that a person, whom he had ever known to be a faithful and an affectionate subject, could be capable of such an abominable piece

of

of treason. It is likewise worthy of remark, that Alexander was in no manner of haste to punish the man who had been represented to him as a criminal. How many innocent persons have we known, who have been sentenced by their princes, upon the slightest evidence, to suffer such severe chastisement, as should never be inflicted upon any, excepting those whose crimes have been fully proved?

## C H A P. XIX.

*Alexander's behavior to the captive family  
and wife of Darius.*

THE behavior of Alexander to the mother, the wife, and the sister of his enemy Darius, was truly heroic and truly worthy of a great sovereign.

vereign. We cannot fail to conceive the highest esteem for the king of Macedon, from his generous and tender treatment of the relatives of the unfortunate king of Persia. It would be well if every sovereign, and every man in general, who may find himself in the same prosperous situation as Alexander, would keep his eye upon this sublime example of virtue, with an inclination to imitate it. To weep at once with admiration and pity, as he actually did, when he beheld the family of Darius, wholly forgetful of their own captivity and wretchedness, and only lamenting the fate of the unhappy monarch, whom they supposed to have been slain; — *this* was an incontestible proof of a most excellent character. One would think that the greatest barbarian upon earth must have been affected at the moving

F scene,

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scene, if he had beheld Alexander all agitated as he was, and unable to stem the torrent of his tears, at the sight of a queen and two unfortunate princesses, bewailing the death of a son, a husband, and a brother;—of a sovereign, who was doubly worthy of compassion, for having given himself up to the self-interested, and perfidious flatteries of the villain Bessus.

Another part of Alexander's conduct which I admire, in this passage of his life, is his taking no offence at the family of Darius, for mistaking his favorite Hæphæstion for himself. What sweetnes, and at the same time what majesty, was there in his answer to the mother of Darius, when she implored his pardon for the error they had been guilty of. “No, my good mother,” (said he) “you are not at all mistaken; “ for

“ for this man also is Alexander.” Another prince, it may be, would have regarded this mistake, at which our hero took no offence, as a breach of the respect due to him, and have taken occasion from thence to treat his captives with so much the less generosity. It was entirely owing to a greatness of soul, which made him capable of overcoming his passions, that Alexander upon this occasion surpassed himself in such an extraordinary manner; — he who could not endure to be compared with any mortal upon earth, and much less with one of his own servants. His reply to the mother of Darius was so gentle, that one would imagine he had made it to a parent, for whom he had the tenderest affection, rather than to the captive mother of his enemy. It is farther observable in his answer, that

he shared the honor of his martial achievements with his favorite Hæphes-  
tion. This passage of history may like-  
wise serve to instruct kings, and the  
greatest princes upon earth, that it is  
not the beauty of the person, or a  
commanding presence, but the great  
qualities of the mind, and of the heart,  
which should distinguish them from  
other men.

## CHAP. XX.

*Alexander bestows the crown of Syria on  
Abdolonymus.*

**I**N the choice of a sovereign, we  
should always fix upon him whose  
merits render him worthy of the throne.  
One of the greatest of the Latin poets  
observed this rule to be so remarkably  
obvious, that he tells us the very  
children

children made use of it in their play:—

“ Behave well, said they, and you  
“ shall be king”\* It proved the wis-  
dom of Alexander’s conduct, when  
he bestowed the crown on Abdolo-  
nymus, and paid a greater regard to  
merit than to rank. It was acting like  
a truly great sovereign, to prefer virtue  
before extraction, when he was to be-  
stow a crown.

We may likewise observe, in this  
passage of Alexander’s life, what differ-  
ence is produced among men by the  
mere force of education. The king of  
Macedon was astonished at Abdolony-  
mus, when he assured him that he had  
been able to pass his life very happily,  
in procuring his daily subsistence by the  
labor of his hands. There was in fact

\* *At pueri ludentes; rex eris, ait, si recte facies.*

Horat. Epist. Lib. I.

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a striking contrast between a conqueror, who lived only for war and glory, and a private man, of an obscure condition, whose only pleasure was to cultivate a small estate, where his days glided smoothly in retirement and innocence.

It seems very extraordinary, that a man of such a warlike disposition as Alexander, should give the preference in the choice he was then making, to a person of a character so remote from his own. The opinion which most prevails, attributes it wholly to the merit of \* Abdolonymus. Without pretending to reject this as entirely groundless, I think it probable that policy had a little share in the choice. Alexander, we may reasonably suppose, was not at

\* Some authors pretend that Abdolonymus was descended from the ancient Kings of Syria.

all displeased at the thoughts of leaving a prince behind him whom he knew he could rely upon, and who was not of the most enterprizing genius.

When I said above that Alexander lived only for war and glory, it was far from my intention to censure the character of this hero. The Almighty hath discovered his infinite wisdom in the creation of mankind, by not bestowing upon all the same sentiments, and the same inclinations. It is of great advantage to the human race, that there should be armies, and chiefs capable of commanding them. This secures the public tranquillity, supports the rights of princes, and renders them mutually respectable to one another. But it would likewise be a great misfortune if there were no men, who chose to apply themselves to the cultivation of the

earth. We should be reduced, in a little time, to the cruel necessity of perishing by famine.

## C H A P. XXI.

*Alexander rejects the moderate proposals of Darius, for the re-establishment of peace.*

**I**CANNOT persuade myself that it was any proof of Alexander's greatness of mind to reject the moderate terms of peace which were proposed by Darius. He was offended at the king of Persia, for offering to cede Lycia, or Lydia; because those countries, as he remarked in his answer, were already his. No body can pretend to say, that Alexander's conduct upon this occasion was reasonable. It is true, indeed, that

Darius

Darius, when he made these proposals, was a weak and an unfortunate prince; but it was very possible that fortune might have abandoned Alexander, and transferred her favors to his antagonist. It is no honor to him who hath the upper hand, to oppress an enemy over whom he hath gained the most considerable advantages. The generosity of granting a reasonable peace to the weakest side, is the greatest glory of a victorious monarch. A greedy wolf, exerting all his strength against a timorous lamb, is the proper emblem of a conqueror who takes advantage of the weakness of his enemy. It is infinitely more noble to forgive.

Another reason to condemn Alexander, for rejecting conditions so advantageous to himself, and so moderate on the part of the king of Persia, is, because

cause Darius offered to cede to him a country, which he could not conquer by force of arms, without shedding the blood of a prodigious number of men. It was likewise uncertain whether he would be able to conquer it after all. But I believe the case was this; — Alexander was too fond of war to be willing to put an end to it, and his only design was to make conquests sword in hand. What makes me think so, is, that unless this was his motive, nothing could have been more unreasonable, than to refuse the quiet possession of a fine province, and reject the friendship of a king, whose heart he might have gained for ever, by only consenting to a moderate treaty: — especially, if we consider, that by his obstinacy, he exposed himself to the continual necessity of irritating his enemy, and disgust-

ing his own soldiers. But, unhappily, if Alexander had accepted the treaty of Darius, he would never have been satisfied in his own mind, because he regarded war as the greatest pleasure in the world. How singular were these notions of Alexander, thus to persuade himself, that to receive a province from the hands of its lawful possessor, was not as truly to conquer it, as if he had ravaged it with fire and sword.

## C H A P. XXII.

*Alexander's behavior to Betis the governor of Gaza.*

**A**LEXANDER, by his behavior to Betis the governor of Gaza, whom he exposed to the most cruel

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torments for having courageously defended his post, discovered that he consulted his passions more than the dictates of reason, or the common idea of what is suitable to the character of a great prince. It is extremely mean and little to take a pleasure in revenging ourselves upon an unfortunate enemy, who is no longer in a condition to do us any prejudice. But it is infinitely more unworthy of a sovereign, to level his resentment against an enemy who hath gallantly defended himself, and served his master with honor and fidelity. I shall offer but two reasons to prove that nothing can be more honourable to a prince, or more opposite to the rules of good policy. On this occasion, Alexander is far from appearing like the son of Philip. He  
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rather looks like Xerxes, ordering the Hellespont to be fettered and scourged, because part of his fleet was lost in it.

A man, who hath nobly sacrificed his all in defence of a post, entrusted to him by his sovereign, can never be enough admired and applauded. He hath given a proof of a truly excellent character, and a heart more attached to his duty than to his interest. What meanness, then, was it in Alexander to shew the world, that he had rather have seen Betis, like a treacherous and a perjured rebel, tamely delivering into his hands, a place which he had sworn to defend, and surrendering with all the marks of a traitor! The more laudable we judge the conduct of Betis, the more contemptible is that of Alexander, Gaza

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was the only place remaining where Darius could shelter himself; all the riches of that unfortunate prince, and every thing he had collected for the subsistence of his army, were deposited in that fortress. Was it possible, then, for Betis to exert himself with too much vigor in its defence?

But what the respect, which is always due to virtue, so apparently condemns, would be equally culpable in a sovereign on the score of good policy. To act in such a rigorous manner as Alexander did to Betis, would be giving the enemy a right to make reprisals, and setting a precedent which might be attended with the most dangerous consequences to the officers of our own army. For is it probable, that we shall find them disposed to make an obstinate defence in their several

veral posts, when they are in expectation of the same rigorous treatment from the enemy, which the latter hath met with in the like circumstances? Alexander, therefore, in the case before us, neither conducted himself like a great king, nor a good politician. After so many proofs which the king of Macedon had given his enemies of the greatness of his mind, he sunk his character, upon this occasion, as much as he had raised it by all the former. Who could believe, that the very same Alexander, who behaved so generously to the captive family of Darius, should treat one of this prince's officers in such an unworthy manner, for having bravely defended his post, and refused to surrender it to the conqueror at the first summons! If he was capable of so much generosity in the former instance, what could

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could hinder him from shewing it in this? When we know that a prince is naturally incapable of entertaining noble sentiments, we are not in the least surprised to find him always in the same contemptible rank in which we left him: but we cannot help being astonished, when we see another, who hath given the world repeated proofs of the greatness of his mind, afterwards falling into actions which are unworthy of his former character. Alexander, therefore, might wish, with good reason, that his conduct to Betis had never been transmitted to posterity: for they must certainly consider it as a great stain to his reputation.

C H A P. XXIII.

*Alexander consents to be called the son of Jupiter.*

ALEXANDER assuming the title of the son of Jupiter, when it was offered to him by the priest of Jupiter Hammon, may serve to teach us to what an astonishing degree a prince may be blinded by the adulation of designing men. The king of Macedonia was very ambitious to be reckoned a genius of the foremost rank: but this instance of his vanity must give the world but a very contemptible opinion of his judgment. How could a prince of so much boasted penetration ever imagine, that there could be any truth in what the priest had told him, when he must have been sensible that he owed

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his birth to Philip and Olympias? He ought, at least; to have reflected, that he could not fail to become the sport of his generals, and of the whole army, by a pretension of which every man amongst them knew the falsity.

We may likewise discern, by this conduct of Alexander, that he already began to regard himself as a much better man than his father, and to think it beneath his dignity to derive his original from a mere mortal,----though this mortal had filled the throne in the most distinguished manner. To what an excess of folly will not vanity transport a prince, when it is prompted on by flattery. This single instance will justify what I said of Alexander, when I observed, that he might have served for a model of a perfect prince, if the lustre of his great qualities had not been

been tarnished by an immoderate ambition.

Of what service was it to him to be styled the son of Jupiter? Did it heighten his glory? On the contrary, if he had been contented to keep Philip for his father, the whole world would have said, that he went to the utmost of human nature, and did every thing of which mortality is capable. But by pretending to be the son of a deity, he hath given every body room to say, upon a review even of his greatest exploits,---

"All this is abundantly too little for the son of Jupiter." It results from hence, that Alexander acted very inconsiderately in affecting such a lofty title. He spread a report among his soldiers and subjects, that a serpent glided into the bosom of his mother Olympias, at the time of her pregnancy.

But what an extravagant whimsy was this, to choose a monster for his father, rather than a prince of the most distinguished merit. The whole story, from the beginning to the end of it, doth not bespeak the great king, but a prince who had absolutely been flattered out of his senses.

## C H A P. XXIV.

*Alexander sheds tears, on bearing of the death of Darius's consort.*

THE tears which were shed by Alexander, when he was informed of the death of his royal captive, the consort of the unfortunate king of Persia, were truly worthy of a crowned head. They were expressive of an excellent heart, which could not remain insensible to the misfortunes of

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his very enemies themselves. Such instances as these are alone sufficient to give us a great opinion of a prince's merit. They are a proof that he must have a noble turn of mind, and may teach all sorts of men, that it is their duty to have compassion on the miserable.

It may perhaps be objected, that Alexander's deep affliction, on this occasion, was only the effect of a violent passion for Statira. Supposing this to be the case, we might easily pardon our hero for not being insensible to the many excellent qualities which history ascribes to that princess. But we have no proof that it really was so. We are certain, at least, that Alexander always guarded against every thing which might afford the slightest suspicion of that kind. He never saw

Statira above once; and then he saw her by mere accident, when he made a visit to the queen-mother. It is true, indeed, that the beauty, and the charming qualities of the unfortunate consort of Darius, had made a visible impression on the son of Philip. But this is the very circumstance which reflects an honor upon his name. Notwithstanding his great esteem for this amiable princess, he understood how to govern his heart. Carefully avoiding every thing which might create and cherish in his breast a criminal passion for that virtuous queen, he never exposed himself to the smallest temptation, which might seduce him to offer violence to the sacred bonds of wedlock. The great Cyrus, one of Darius's predecessors, hath given us an example of a conduct which is equally glorious, and

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it is not improbable, that the Almighty, in the instance now before us, had an intention to reward the descendants of Cyrus for that prince's generous behavior to Panthea the wife of Abradates.

The famous Scipio Africanus, and the great *Turenne* among the moderns, have each of them sufficiently taught us, by their example, what an amiable thing it is to respect the virtue of an unfortunate captive. It were to be wished, that all princes would oblige themselves to imitate these truly excellent models. They are infinitely more concerned than men of a private capacity to preserve the mastery over their own inclinations. The greatest king upon earth is no longer a king, when he condescends to become a slave to his passions. The name of a hero, and a great prince, belongs only to him

who can imitate the generous conduct of Alexander to his charming captive Statira.

### C H A P. XXV.

*The battle of Arbela.*

THE famous battle of Arbela reflects an honor on the name of Alexander. The courage and the conduct, which he displayed in that memorable combat, were truly great and heroic, and such as proved him to be worthy of the generous blood from which he derived his birth. It is true, indeed, that in the beginning of the action the victory seemed to incline to Darius: because the Persians, who fell upon the baggage of the Macedonians, threw the army into confusion at the first

first onset. But Alexander had too much judgment and resolution to be disheartened at such a trifling rebuff; on the contrary, he redoubled his efforts till the Persian army was entirely defeated. It appears to me, that the latter committed a capital blunder in falling upon the enemy's baggage! They judged of the Macedonians by themselves, and thought, by this means, to have attacked them in the most sensible part. But the very circumstance, in the conduct of Alexander, which most deserves to be commended, is his giving himself no trouble about the baggage, but choosing rather to abandon it to the Persians, than to leave them masters of the field. Nothing can be a greater mistake, than to imagine that a well-disciplined army, which is commanded by a general of real ability, must be unavoidable.

voidably beaten after they have once lost their baggage. The commander will make a jest of this misfortune, and the soldiery will not be disheartened in the least: because they are certain that their sovereign will abundantly indemnify them for all the losses they may sustain in his service. The same mistake was committed by the Austrians at the battle of Soor. Instead of falling upon the Prussian army, they amused themselves with plundering the baggage: and this was one of the principal circumstances which decided the victory in favor of the Prussians. It was greatly to the honor of Alexander, at the battle of Arbela, to make his advantage of an accident which at first seemed to threaten a defeat.

which has been noted for its great bonfires  
and grand scenes, will be the principal  
feature.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXVI.

*Alexander saves the life of his old governor*

*Lysimachus.*

**L**YSIMACHUS, the old tutor of Alexander, having engaged himself too far in the pursuit, fell into the hands of the enemy. When Alexander perceived it, he instantly threw himself into the very midst of them, with an ardor which was worthy of his own greatness of soul, and set Lysimachus at liberty. This exploit doth the highest honor to our hero. I am infinitely pleased to see him expose himself in so laudable a cause. I must conclude, that he had a very lively sense of his obligations to a man, who had been at so much trouble in his education.

tion. I envy him not the glory of filling a throne, but the pleasure of having given the world such a proof of his affectionate attachment to his governor. This passage of his life deserves to be written in letters of gold. We are sensible, that it is our duty to shew our gratitude to every body, who hath done us any service. How much then must we owe to those who have sacrificed their whole time, their pleasures, and frequently their very health, that they might be always at leisure to promote our present and our eternal happiness! What painful disappointment must a man feel, who sees a prince, to whom he hath made such very important sacrifices, behave in a manner which is unworthy of the instructions he hath given him, and requite his services with the vilest ingratitude. Both ancient and modern

modern history afford too many examples of a conduct so ungenerous and detestable. Alexander merits the greater commendations, because, notwithstanding he was often blinded by his vanity, he was still capable of giving the world such a proof of his gratitude to his old master. It is farther observable, that he was not animated, upon this occasion, by an ambition to distinguish himself, but only yielded to his innate generosity ; —— a circumstance which heightens the glory of the action, and renders it really a great one.

## C H A P. XXVII.

*Alexander proposes prizes to his army, to  
preserve them from inactivity.*

ALEXANDER acted the part of a virtuous prince, and a prudent general, when, after the battle of Arbela, and the conquest of Babylon, he proposed rewards to his victorious soldiers, that he might keep them out of idleness. This was the only method he could take to preserve his army within bounds, and prevent them from suffering the same misfortune which befell the troops of Hannibal, after he had permitted them to taste the pleasures of luxury in their winter-quarters at Capua. It was very easy for the soldiers of Alexander to have shared

the same fate. They might imagine, that after they had conquered their enemy in the field, and had nothing farther to combat with, but the feeble remains of a tottering and a vanquished power, they might safely consign themselves to amusement and soft repose. The most trifling victory will be sufficient to swell the courage of a soldier to such an enormous degree, that he will afterwards think it impossible that he should ever be defeated. How naturally might the army of Alexander have abandoned themselves to these wild emotions, after they had discovered, upon so many occasions, that they were in a manner invincible. It is, generally speaking, a great advantage for an army, to be animated with such an uncommon flow of spirits. But to imagine that there is no necessity for exert-

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exerting the same efforts as before, to compleat the victory we have gained, is the never-failing source of misfortunes.

We must farther applaud Alexander, for endeavoring to preserve his soldiers from idleness, the mother of all vices. A private soldier is capable of the most extravagant irregularities, and such as he would never otherwise have thought of, when he is led to them by want of better employment. Alexander could not have done a better thing, than to summon his officers and soldiers to contend for the prizes in the several games he exhibited. He thus kept them at an equal distance from effeminacy and indolence. This part, therefore of his conduct, must do an honor to the prudence of the king of Macedon.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXVIII.

*Alexander conforms to the customs of the Medes and Persians.*

WHEN Alexander had conquered Media and Persia, he adopted the customs of the inhabitants. I do not censure him for it in the least. If his design was to gain the hearts of the vanquished, I must highly commend his conduct. He might possibly have acted thus, from a mere principle of generosity, and to render his government more easy and agreeable to the conquered people. But, in fact, they are only persons of an ordinary capacity, who are imposed upon by such policy as this. Those who are exalted

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by their quality and understanding, above the undiscerning vulgar, will easily penetrate into the secret views of these popular measures. But allowing that Alexander's only motive for giving the preference to the modes and customs of the East, was to indulge his own ease, he might still be very excusable. It is but reasonable that a sovereign, who hath abundantly more business upon his hands than other men, should be relieved by more plentiful enjoyment of the conveniencies and amusements of life. But, after all, in my opinion, it much better becomes a conqueror, to introduce his own customs, among the vanquished, than to conform to theirs. Alexander might have justly deviated from this common rule, if he had found the military art, among the Persians, in greater perfection than among

mong his countrymen the Macedonians. He ought, in this case, to have imitated them without the least hesitation; it was thus that the Romans raised their empire to such an amazing height of grandeur. "It is worthy remarking," says Mr. de Montesquieu "that the circumstance which most contributed to render the Romans masters of the world, was, that after they had successively fought against people of all nations, they constantly renounced their own customs; whenever they met with better to substitute in the room of them."

## C H A P. XXIX.

*Alexander sets fire to the magnificent palace of the kings of Persia, at the instigation of the famous courtezan Thaïs.*

ALEXANDER's setting fire to Persepolis, at the instigation of Thaïs, must be allowed to be one of the greatest stains he ever brought upon his character. It was, in its own nature, a very unreasonable thing, to destroy one of the finest cities in the world, which for its beauty alone deserved to share a better fate: but the motive of this action was more unworthy than the action itself. We may however learn from hence, that the greatest genius, and a prince who hath been remarkably capable of governing him-

himself, upon many other occasions, may sometimes forget himself all at once, and disgrace his name by actions at which the meanest of his soldiers would have blushed. If the king of Macedon's passion for the fair-sex was apt to get the better of him, he should carefully have guarded against every thing which might tend to inflame it. He had been able to conquer himself, as I have mentioned elsewhere, in the case of the beautiful consort of Darius, and to prevent the impression of her charms by avoiding the sight of them. Why then did he thus abandon himself to a contemptible woman, who was only remarkable for her dissolute way of life? Unworthy as he was, upon this occasion, of the royal name, what a shameful and pernicious example did he set before his army! Whom could he have

blamed but himself, if, in the sequel, all his officers and soldiers had taken the freedom to imitate his behaviour? If our king, might they justly have said, is capable of committing such actions, what should prevent us from taking the liberty to follow his example?

We might, in some measure, have excused Alexander, if he had only set fire to Persepolis by the hands of his servants. We might then have thought that such a cruel order had been extorted by their pressing importunities. But there is no room for any excuse of this nature; because Alexander, at the head of his drunken companions, was the first amongst them who threw a lighted torch into the palace. The scandal of this infamous action falls entirely upon himself. I might truly say, that he appeared, upon this occasion,

sion, to be infinitely more contemptible than Darius; though the latter is represented in history as an uxorious monarch, who trailed his wives along with him, whithersoever he went. If we should undertake to draw a parallel between Alexander, and the celebrated Charles the XIIth, the latter would always be greatly superior to him in the article of women.

## C H A P. XXX.

*The concern of Alexander at the sight of  
the dead body of Darius.*

WHEN Alexander saw the corpse of the unfortunate Darius, in a situation little worthy of so great a monarch, he could not refrain from shedding tears, and appeared to be sensibly

sibly affected with his fate. He instantly covered the body with his own mantle, and conveyed it to Sisigambis, to be interred after the Persian manner. I am not surprised that Alexander should take so large a share in the misfortunes of an ill-fated king, whom I consider as a real object of compassion. To have beheld with indifference the life of so respectable a prince cut short by the bloody hands of a perfidious unthankful villain, whom he had honored with his greatest confidence;—his heart must have been hard and insensible to the last degree! But this object ought naturally to have been so much the more affecting to Alexander, because he was possessed of a generous soul, and because an easy retrospect upon himself might have suggested the disagreeable reflexion;—“ that it

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“ was very far from being impossible, “ that he, in his turn, might have suf- “ fered the same unhappy fate.” This was a fine opportunity to instruct him, that he ought never to be so infatuated as to lay himself at the mercy of a favorite; and it might likewise serve to remind him, that the greatest of kings may sometimes become the sport of fortune.

## C H A P. XXXI.

*The queen of Caria sends her cooks to Alexander.*

THE queen of Caria sent her cooks to Alexander, that they might furnish his table with all the dainties which were then in fashion. The king of Macedon did not think proper to accept of them, but after thank-

thanking her for the favor, sent her word, “ That such niceties were entirely useless to him, because he had learnt in his youth, that good exercise in the morning would create him an appetite for the plainest dinner, and that the toils of the day would render him the same service at supper-time.”

This answer of Alexander was a very fine one, and really worthy of a great king and a great general. It proves that he was no friend to effeminacy, and that he thought it to be extremely pernicious to the constitution. In the rank he occupied, a man should employ his attention upon objects of more importance, than the delicacies and the luxury of the table. An effeminate way of life will render us, in many respects, incapable of supporting even the smallest inconveniencies. Frequent

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riding, long marches on foot, and the exercises of the troops, which will always oblige him who hath the care of it to make extensive movements, are suitable to the character of a prince and of a great commander. It is by these means he preserves himself from being enervated by effeminacy, maintains his mind and his body in full vigor, and qualifies himself upon occasion to exert a proper share of manhood. A chief can never distinguish himself from his inferiors in a more laudable manner, than when we behold him always in action.

It is farther a very useful thing, in a prince, to set an example of temperance and sobriety. The lower class of people, who are always observed to be mighty fond of imitating their betters, will presently tread in his steps; and

nothing will more effectually contribute to the good of the public. A frugal way of living would be a means of preserving cities and armies from all those fatal disorders, which take their rise from an excess of intemperance, and make such lamentable havock among the species. A general, who gives a proper example of this nature, will soon discover, among his officers and soldiers, a vigor and firmness, from which he may derive the most important advantages. His forces will be capable of supporting want and hunger to admiration, when they are obliged to it by the misfortunes of war. It may therefore be considered as one of the principal duties of a commander, never to suffer his soldiers to give themselves over to effeminacy, but to banish every thing from their way of living which

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may have a tendency to introduce it amongst them. The present age hath furnished us with an instance of the dreadful consequences of effeminacy, in a nation which hath shared nearly the same fate as that of the Hebrews. These reflexions are a sufficient proof, that when Alexander rejected the offers of the queen of Caria, he acted like a great king and an able general.

## C H A P. XXXII.

*Alexander offers a reward to the greatest drinker in his army.*

**T**HE same Alexander, whom we have beheld returning so noble an answer to the queen of Caria, when he was afterwards sitting at table with

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his friends, proposed a reward to that man in his army who could drink more than the rest. We may see, from this instance, how remarkably a man may differ from himself. Alexander, who had so lately demeaned himself like a wise and a temperate prince, is now acting like a second Sardanapalus. It is in vain to seek an excuse for this action, by pretending that the person who won the prize, though he lost his life by his excess, did not drink near the quantity which a professed tippler would have swallowed with ease in the same case. The very proposing such a prize was, in itself, a most unworthy piece of conduct; and we have several melancholy instances of the power which was actually exercised over Alexander, by that passion which he here encouraged by rewarding it. We have already

already mentioned the fate of Persepolis, which he reduced to ashes; and we shall soon have occasion to relate the murder of Clitus, as another proof of the same truth. If Alexander, in abandoning himself to this species of intemperance and debauchery, had injured no one but himself, we might perhaps have pardoned him: but even then, he would not have been wholly excusable. But the circumstance which renders him doubly culpable, is the pernicious example which he gave his officers and soldiers. At the same time, that they lost all respect for their chief, they were encouraged to commit the like irregularities for which their master had discovered so high a relish.

## C H A P. XXXIII.

*Alexander is overpowered with indolence.*

ALEXANDER, after he had conquered Darius, was himself overcome by indolence. Of what service were all his victories, and all the fame he had acquired, if he was not capable of conquering himself? There was nothing he ought to have guarded against more carefully, than inactivity and idleness; because, a failing of this kind must have had a pernicious influence on the conduct of his officers and soldiers. We may add, that, by plunging himself into an excess of luxury and pleasure, the military exercise must of course have been rendered insupportable

able to him, on account of the fatigue which attends it,—the discipline of his troops must have been relaxed,—and his enemies would have had the advantage over him considerably, if he had not at last been roused from his lethargy, by the report that he had formed a resolution of marching home. Alexander was very far from acting the part of a prudent general and a great king, by indulging himself in such an indolent manner. His behavior, upon this occasion, was entirely opposite to the conduct he observed, when he exhibited prizes to his soldiers to keep them out of idleness. What could his subjects imagine, from the many contradictions which they discovered in his way of life? So eager as he lately appeared to prevent the dangers of inaction and effeminacy in other people,

how came he, after all, to yield to them with so much readiness himself? We may see, in this part of Alexander's conduct, what a prince may come to, when he is no longer supported and actuated by the noble motive of emulation. Alexander, after the death of Darius, may be compared to Rome, after the destruction of Carthage. After the downfall of their enemies, both the one and the other were equally destitute of their former emulation. After the death of the king of Persia, we shall find scarcely a single action of any notice in the life of Alexander, excepting the victory which he gained over Porus. What prince, or what commander, may not learn from this example, how nearly it concerns him to be upon his guard against the charms of indolent pleasure, as a poison which will

will infallibly blast the vigor both of his body and his mind, and wither all his glory.

C H A P. XXXIV.

*The conduct of Alexander in the case of  
Philotas the son of Parmenio.*

THE conduct of Alexander towards Philotas, the son of the famous Parmenio, who had rendered him so many signal services, does not please me at all. He should not have suffered a poor man to be put to death, who could never have been convicted of having formed a conspiracy against his master, without exposing him to all the horror of the most excruciating tortures. At first, indeed, he discovered

some remains of tenderness for the unfortunate criminal. He seemed to hear with concern, that the son of one of his most faithful servants was really guilty of the crime alledged against him. But he immediately altered his sentiments, upon the malicious remonstrances of Craterus, who insinuated, that it was absolutely necessary that Philotas should suffer death. There was, however, no need of any uncommon penetration, to discern that this advice of Craterus proceeded more from a regard to his own interest, than from his zeal for the service of his master. How then could Alexander be so thoughtless as not to perceive it?

Even supposing that Philotas was actually guilty, we must acknowledge, that it would have been infinitely more noble to have pardoned him. It may in-

indeed be objected, that it was proper that Alexander should give his officers and soldiers such an example as might keep them to their duty. But it was likewise equally proper to have had some consideration for the family connections of the unhappy criminal. The gratitude which Parmenio had merited for his good services, should have engaged Alexander to have shewn as much favor as possible to Philotas, out of respect to an unfortunate father, who had lost his two other sons by employing them to fight for his master. It was highly unworthy of a sovereign, or at least of such a magnanimous prince as Alexander pretended to be, to deprive an old officer, who had laid him under the greatest obligations, of the only son he had remaining; and that by the most disgraceful kind of punish-

ment, and without the necessary proofs of his guilt. It is true, indeed, that if the accusation which was lodged against Philotas had been fully proved, his crime must have been exceeding great. But even in this case, it would have been a glorious thing to have pardoned him, out of respect to the uncommon merit of his father. Such an action would have given us the highest opinion of Alexander's character. No one could have accused him of injustice, because he would only have submitted to the impulses of an honorable and a well-founded gratitude. He would have merited the same eulogies which were afterwards bestowed upon Augustus for his noble clemency to Cinna.

I must farther observe, that Alexander should have attended to the real motives which might engage Philotas

to form a conspiracy against his person. These were the insufferable pride of the king of Macedon. This prince had no reason to be surprized, that persons, who had served him with the utmost zeal and fidelity, should take offence at the great haughtiness and arrogance with which he usually treated them.

There is a remarkable difference between the case of Philotas and that of Biron, who was so noted for his pride and for the unfortunate end he came to. Henry the fourth, who may be called the modern Titus, forgave Biron no less than three times; and would certainly have pardoned him once more, if, by his insolence, he had not compelled the very mildest of princes to order him to be put to death. Henry had loaded Biron with favors. But Alexander had not behaved himself in the

most grateful manner to Philotas. Biron had performed great services ; but he made a boast of them in the presence of his sovereign. Philotas had always discharged the duty of a brave officer, and never pretended to make a merit of his fidelity. Henry had pardoned Biron no less than three times. Alexander punished Philotas for the very first offence. I am almost of opinion, that Alexander would never have been so eager to have Philotas destroyed, unless he had been really ashamed of the ingratitude with which he had used him ; and that, at the same time, he was unwilling to reward him for his services, lest he should render him too powerful.

C H A P. XXXV.

*Alexander puts Parmenio to death.*

THE king of Macedon is entirely inexcusable for putting Parmenio to death, by a piece of treachery, which was unworthy of an honest man. If we suppose the servant to have been guilty, it was the duty of his master to put him to death by a public execution; or if he did not judge it prudent to have him executed openly, he ought at least to have made him suffer in a more legal and a less exceptionable manner. It is at all times unworthy of a prince to have recourse to treachery, but especially when his business is to punish. For this will tempt us to suspect, that the person, against whom

whom he employs it, is really innocent. In any case whatsoever, nothing can be more incompatible than treachery and honesty. The man, who employs the former, shews the world, that when occasion serves, he can adopt the most illegal measures for the execution of his designs. If Parmenio, therefore, was criminal, it is equally true that he was shamefully used by Alexander.

But what renders this action of Alexander still more odious, is the reflexion that Parmenio was entirely innocent, and only fell a victim to the unpitying jealousy of his master. The king of Macedon hath sufficiently given us to understand, that he could not brook the glory of Parmenio, and that he only sought to get rid of him, because he had refused to bear a part in his follies, and

and had taken the freedom to give him sensible advice. For what reason then could he put a subject to death by those indirect methods which are suggested by treachery and artifice, when he might openly have exercised the authority, both of a judge and a sovereign; unless it was merely because he was conscious that his subject was innocent? Such a proceeding is at once an argument of great baseness and great ingratitude. It is likewise opposite to all the rules of good policy. For was it not the ready way to smother the zeal of his officers in promoting his service, and to instruct them to get rid of himself in the same manner? Or had Alexander no reason to fear that Polydamas, after he had assisted in so black an action, might one day prove capable of carrying to the very throne itself those villainous attempts of

of which he had made his first essay or Parmenio? Who could ever have conceived that the king of Macedon should be guilty of an action so unworthy, so ungrateful, and so opposite to the maxims of sound policy, and to the glory of a prince and a sovereign? But to what lengths of wickedness may we not be hurried by unbounded pride, and excessive self-love! Or what inconstancy will not these passions produce, both in character and conduct! According to the different demands of their interest, they will sometimes elevate the soul to the most generous actions, and at other times depress it to the most unjust and the most infamous crimes. The reader may perhaps be astonished that I should censure Alexander with so much severity; but let him remember that I am not at liberty to vindi-

vindicate the justice of the action above-mentioned. Even those who have honored Lewis the XIV. with the title of Great, must censure him for having treated with so much rigor that miserable sport of the caprices of fortune,—the unhappy Fouquet. Lewis, however, was more excusable than Alexander; because Colbert had represented Fouquet as the most dangerous subject in his kingdom. But Alexander only sacrificed Parmenio to his own jealousy, and his aversion to men of worth and probity, whose stedfast and inflexible virtue was above stooping to the vile offices of a courtier. We may add, that Lewis was a young monarch, and had but little experience; but Alexander, who had filled the throne of Macedon several years, should have been better

better acquainted with the duties of the royal station.

## C H A P. XXXVI.

*The king of Macedon puts Bessus to death.*

**A**LEXANDER, in ordering Bessus to be tortured to death, only followed the laws of justice: because that treacherous inhuman villain had betrayed a sovereign, who had honored him with his greatest confidence. A prince should always punish a traitor. If he rewards him, he will inspire his subjects and soldiers, with an inclination to imitate his perfidy. Alexander, therefore, in the case before us, conducted himself with equal prudence and justice. Every person may learn

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from hence, how extremely dangerous it is to be the tool of a monarch's treachery. Those who set such designs on foot escape the punishment they deserve: this commonly falls upon those who lend their assistance in the execution. A king will readily accept the service of a traitor; but after he hath done with him, he will not fail to punish him. He is obliged to do so; because he hath reason to fear that, in time, he may turn against himself the very same weapons of perfidy and artifice which he hath employed in his service, whenever he may be urged to it by the prospect of any considerable advantage. Besides, as I have observed in the preceding chapter, nothing can be more unworthy of a king, than to have recourse to treachery, and reward a wretch who can execute any projects

of

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of that nature. I am farther pleased, that Alexander left the punishment of Bessus to Oxathres, the brother of Darius. This may assure us, that the king of Macedon was so far from approving of the murder of his enemy, that, on the contrary, he was really desirous of revenging his unhappy fate in a manner very severe for the criminal; — thus convincing the world, that he abhorred the conduct of a subject who was unfaithful and treacherous to his lawful sovereign.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXXVII.

*The death of Clitus.*

ALEXANDER did not act like a king, but like a savage beast, when he bathed his hands in the blood of Clitus, who had rendered him so many important services. This action of Alexander is infamous, in every point of view. The excess of intemperance in which he committed it, the praises which he bestowed upon his own victories, and which furnished the provocation, and, lastly, the very action itself, were all equally unpardonable.

A king who abandons himself to excessive drinking, is more to be dreaded than a furious lion. I may save my

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life when I am assaulted by a wild beast, but I have not the power to defend myself against a king. There is no vice which a sovereign should more carefully guard against than that of drunkenness. It renders him totally incapable of government, and not only degrades him beneath the rational creation, but even sinks him below the brutes. No vice whatsoever can expose him to such terrible misfortunes. While it divests him of the use of his reason, his ministers and servants may conduct every thing as they please. He will neither have trusty ministers, nor faithful friends: for what affection, or what esteem can they have for a master, whom wine may transport in a moment to the greatest extravagancies? It is always unworthy of a good man to revile the memory of the deceased,

ceased, and especially of those who have been united to him by the ties of blood. But it is still more unworthy of a prince, to insult the memory of a father, who hath distinguished himself by the greatest exploits. Alexander was guilty of equal meanness and injustice, when he depreciated the memory of his father, and when he bestowed such immoderate praises upon his own victories. One may see that he suffered himself to be hurried away, by the suggestions of a vicious self-love, which persuaded him that his own military achievements had eclipsed those of Philip. Such an insult must be sensibly felt at all times; but when it proceeds from a king, it becomes a mortal wound. Alexander, therefore, had no right to resent the freedom of Clitus, who could no longer contain himself, when he heard this vain-

glorious prince speak so meanly of his father, and extoll his own bravery to the skies. Such a man as Clitus must naturally have been provoked to see a king, so young as Alexander, insulting the memory of a father, who had signalized himself in the most extraordinary manner. The honest heart of this favorite of the king of Macedon was still full of esteem for his old master; and of consequence, the arrogant speeches of Alexander could not fail to give him the highest disgust. Besides, when Alexander thus proclaimed his own praises, he made no mention of his officers; on the contrary, he plainly insinuated, that all his victories were entirely owing to himself. What honest man could listen to such discourse, and not be moved? But Clitus had more right to resent it than any other person:

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because he had largely contributed to Alexander's victories, and, what is more, he had saved his life. It is true, indeed, that Clitus should have governed his passion a little better than he did: but who doth not know what a brave officer is capable of, when he is wounded in the tenderest part about him,---his honor? But what renders his warmth more excusable, is the circumstance of a public feast, where his temper, inflamed by the force of wine, might be less capable of restraint. The example he had before him, and the manners of the age, will not suffer us to impute it to Clitus as a great crime, that he did not govern himself in the article of drink, so carefully as he ought to have done.

It is now time to proceed to the action of Alexander:---an action which is

far more unworthy than any I have yet related. For a king to murder in his own palace, and with his own hands, a man who had not only rendered him the most valuable services, but even saved his life, and, instead of every other recompence, to plunge a spear into his breast,—this includes at once whatever can be deemed most horrible. This was the most barbarous and brutal action Alexander had ever committed. If he found himself nettled at the unadvised freedoms of Clitus, he should have made him sensible of it in a good-natured way, and employed the voice of friendship to prevent the matter from going farther. But if he really thought that the indiscretion of Clitus deserved death, and supposed that even gratitude itself, how reasonable soever it might be, could no longer plead with him

him in behalf of the criminal; he ought at least, to have employed other hands for the execution of the punishment. His own should never have been polluted with the blood of a friend, who had formerly saved his life. It is impossible to think of any thing more execrable than such an action as this. What ingratitude was it, thus to murder, in a fit of rage, a man who had been guilty of no other crime than that of speaking with a little too much liberty; when, after all, it was owing to this very man, that he was still in a capacity to behold the light of the sun!

We may add, that nothing can be more dishonorable to a king than to perform the office of an executioner? At the same time that such an action renders him highly contemptible, it

puts him in danger of being assassinated; for, in the moment of despair, the wretch against whom he lifts up his hand, might very easily be tempted to preserve his own life by the death of his sovereign. We have an instance of this in the history of England. When Henry the II<sup>d</sup> was going to kill one of his subjects who had offended him, the man instantly drew his poignard, and stabbed him in the breast.

C H A P. XXXVIII.

*Alexander bewails the death of Clitus.*

**T**HE guilty Alexander, when it was too late, repented of the murder of Clitus. He discovered the utmost sorrow, and at last grew

so outrageous, that he would certainly have destroyed himself, if his officers had not prevented him. I am pleased to see him manifesting such regret for such a barbarous action. We may perceive by this, that he committed it in the first transports of his fury, and not from deliberate malice. But what availed all his sorrow? It could not restore life to his friend, whom he had sacrificed to his passion. He should have thought upon the cruelty of the action, before he murdered Clitus. His being touched with such remorse, after he had committed the fact, affords but little room for commendation; because no person, who hath the slenderest feelings of humanity, can reflect upon the action without horror. What a frightful aspect, then, must it naturally have presented to him  
who

who had incurred the guilt of it? This instance may instruct princes, in general, what are the effects of such inhuman proceedings, and with what mournful consequences they are attended. These are, first, a bitter repentance for having committed the crime; then a profound sorrow, which overwhelming the guilty soul with a melancholy gloom, makes it imagine, every moment, that it hears the cries of the blood it hath spilt; and, last of all, despair and madness, accompanied with a strong desire to end a wretched life by violence. We suffer none of these emotions, when, in war, we are obliged to deprive an enemy of his life, in the discharge of our duty. But how is it possible to escape them, when we have been base enough to defile our hands with the blood of a friend, whose

whose only crime was forgetting himself in conversation? The regret of Alexander may likewise teach us, that if, on the one hand, we cannot be too much concerned for the faults we have committed, we ought, on the other, to be constantly upon our guard against every thing which may bring after it the bitter fruits of repentance.

## C H A P. XXXIX.

*Alexander orders the wife of Spitamenes to leave his camp.*

ALEXANDER had a great deal of reason to order the wife of Spitamenes out of his camp, when she brought him the head of her husband, whom she had murdered with her own hands.

hands. He ought naturally to punish such a horrible piece of cruelty. It is true, indeed, that the king of Macedon might be very well pleased to get rid of a traitor, and of an enemy who was in a capacity to thwart his designs, and oppose the progress of his arms. But, at the same time, it roused his indignation, to see that a wife could be capable of so much barbarity, and, by a double crime, at once burst asunder the sacred bonds which united her to her husband, and snatch a father from their common offspring. Perhaps, even a Roman lady might have been capable of killing her husband; but she would have done it merely to save her honor, which she ought to value as the most precious thing she had.

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The motives which influenced the conduct of the wife of Spitamenes were really infamous; they were nothing but a spirit of revenge, and the hopes of being well rewarded by Alexander. But, upon this occasion, he discovered a real greatness of mind. He gave a proof of an excellent character, and shewed the world that he was an enemy to cruelty, though it might favor his own interests. Nothing can be more just than the motive from which his severity proceeded. He said himself, that he was afraid, if he should give any encouragement to so barbarous an action, that other wives might behave in the same manner. Such an instance of caution was, beyond dispute, highly worthy of his humanity! Every prince should take the conduct of Alexander, on this occasion, for the model of his own.

own. It is a fine example both of prudence and virtue. If he had rewarded this unnatural monster, he would have been the object of public contempt; but the manner in which he behaved to her, obliges us to respect him as a great prince, who could never be prevailed upon, by any motives of interest, to give the sanction of his royal approbation to such detestable actions.

## C H A P. XL.

*Alexander's great firmness of mind, and his humanity to his soldiers, when they were ready to perish with cold in the march to Gabaza.*

**T**HE conduct of Alexander, when his army was on the point of perishing with cold, in its march to Gabaza,

Gabaza, is worthy of a great king, and a brave general. We might then have seen him running from regiment to regiment, to help those who were almost dead, through the severity of the cold, to give them the necessary assistance, and to support and re-animate their courage. On this occasion, he did every thing which could be reasonably expected. We might even say that he did a great deal more than could be required of a king and a general;—a circumstance which is alone sufficient to entitle him to the highest honors. But what heightens his glory, is, that he was so far from being disheartened himself, that he had the constancy and invincible firmness to encourage others. It is here we discover in him the great man, and the great king. We can never know a person better, than when

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he is wrestling and struggling with misfortunes. When we behold him standing the shocks of adversity with a manly resolution, it is then we have an indisputable right to give him the title of Great. Alexander really deserved it, on this occasion, for surmounting, by the mere dint of his courage, every obstacle which the malice of fortune threw in his way.

I am likewise infinitely pleased with his humanity. It was such as must do honor to a crowned head; and we can never enough admire him for his generous behavior to his soldiers. I am so struck with it, that I shall speak of it more at large in the following chapter. Every prince should imitate the fine example which is here presented by the king of Macedon. He may infer from thence, that constancy and courage

courage are the certain means to vanquish even the greatest difficulties. He may likewise see, that humanity, at the same time that it is infinitely more conducive than austerity to the success of his enterprises, will secure to him the general esteem of his soldiers, and the approbation of all the world.

**C H A P. XLI.**  
*The humanity of Alexander to one of his soldiers in the march to Gabara.*

**I**N his march to Gabara, Alexander, the famous conqueror of Asia, hath given us a fine example of the conduct which a sovereign should observe to his soldiers and other subjects. Taking notice of a private soldier who was be-

numbed, and almost dead with cold, he instantly leaped from his calash, and placed the man in his room. When the poor wretch had recovered his senses, and saw himself in the royal carriage, he started up in a great fright.

“ My honest friend,” said Alexander,

“ don’t disturb yourself. Only con-  
sider how much happier the condi-  
tion of the Macedonians is, than that  
of the Persians: for in the latter, it  
would have been a capital crime to  
sit in the monarch’s calash, but to  
you it hath been the means of saving  
life.” This behavior of Alexander  
was humane, and noble, and truly  
worthy of a king who had acquired  
such an uncommon share of glory. It  
shews that the king of Macedon was  
very sensible that his subjects were hu-  
man creatures like himself, and that  
their

their being his subjects, could not preclude them from a right to his compassion. This manner of thinking should be adopted by all kings in general. The Almighty hath exalted them above the rest of their fellow-men, that they may render them more happy under their government. He never intended that princes should use their subjects as if they were animals of an inferior species, but that they should treat them as persons who have received, from the common parent of mankind, the same nature as themselves. Happy the sovereign who, in this respect, answers the views of the Supreme! The most mistaken, and the most unworthy notion which can enter into the heart of a king, is to persuade himself that he may use his subjects as he pleases; because chance alone hath

made the difference between them, by placing the one upon a throne, and the others in a state of dependance. A prince can never give the world a stronger proof of his greatness of mind, than by his gentle and benevolent treatment of those who are subjected to his authority. By this means he obliges every body to esteem and love him. He is respected as the father of his country, and whatever is done for his service, is always executed with pleasure, and, consequently, a great deal better than it would have been had the case been otherwise.

A sovereign can never so much disgrace himself, as by treating his subjects with a barbarous and a tyrannical severity. It would be needless to observe, that nothing can be more opposite to the benevolent laws of Christianity;

Mianity, every body is sensible of this. The bare reflection, that both kings and their people are alike partakers of the same nature, ought to satisfy the former, that it is their duty to treat their subjects with generosity. The design of the Almighty, in thus exalting them to royalty and empire, was to make them national fathers. A king, therefore, who is brutal enough to abuse and oppress his subjects, reverses this beneficent plan, which is so worthy of its divine author. Alexander merits the greater commendation for setting a different example, because he was only a pagan. His behavior condemns the conduct of many christian princes. They can no longer pretend that they have any reason to be afraid of lessening themselves, by stooping to the assistance of one of their subjects. One of

the greatest monarchs in all the records of antiquity, hath taught them to have compassion on the miserable, and taste the godlike pleasure of contributing to the preservation of their lives. In these words, —— “ My honest friend, don’t disturb yourself, &c.” I discover all the dignity of a great king, and the goodness of a tender father. How sensibly must they have revived the drooping courage of the poor soldier to whom they were spoken! My opinion, therefore, of this action of Alexander, is, that it can never be enough commended.

garrison, if he drew on various resources  
and by means of entrapments, etc., etc.

C H A P. XLII.

*Alexander demands divine honors. His behavior to Polyperchon for refusing to pay them.*

I HAVE already observed, that Alexander acted the part of a prince blinded by adulation, when he wanted to pass for the son of Jupiter. We might have left him to enjoy the idle pleasure which such a whim might afford his vanity, if he had not carried his extravagance to such a length as to claim divine honors. A king should never be so inflated by the good success with which fortune hath crowned him, as to forget that he is a man, and exalt himself to an equality with his

master. To say no worse of it, nothing can be more opposite to good policy. A prince's subjects must conceive a great contempt for him, when he supposes himself to be of a nature more dignified than the rest of mankind. I would, however, have pardoned Alexander's vain pretensions, if he had left honest folks the liberty of judging for themselves. But to require that persons, who had known him from his very childhood, and rendered him the most considerable services, should so far humor him, as to allow him divine honors,—this is a pretension very unreasonable in itself, and very unworthy of the great name he had acquired. It was an unreasonable pretension, because he extended it to those very persons who had been the instruments of the uncommon grandeur he had then attained

to, and which made him fancy that he was entitled to divine honors. I have added, that it was a very unworthy pretension, because it argues a soul too weak to support the splendor of such remarkable prosperity without forgetting itself. When Polypercon would not prostrate himself as the Persian did, the king of Macedon threw him to the ground by main force, with this taunting speech,—"There, Sir," said he, "you are now doing the very thing which you have just been laughing at another for."\* He then ordered him to be imprisoned for his insolence; but he afterwards forgave him. Some

\* Polypercon had been laughing at a Persian, who, out of respect to the king, had prostrated himself so very low, that he almost touched the ground with his chin.

politicians, perhaps, will not be pleased with me, because I have censured the king of Macedon with so much freedom for pretending to divine honors. This, according to them, was nothing more than a stroke of policy, to increase the reverence of his subjects and soldiers. But they are guilty of a great mistake. For though he might, perhaps, by this means, inspire a greater respect for his person into the minds of the vulgar; men of sense would only despise him the more, for thus endeavouring to raise himself above the level of humanity. They could not but discern the true principles of such a pretension, and regard it with a severe eye. He must have given them but a very mean opinion of his merit, by shewing himself to be a prince, who was capable of the most ridiculous ex-  
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travagances, to gratify his inward vanity. In short, we may learn from this action of the king of Macedon, that a great sovereign should never suffer himself to be inflated with pride, though he should rise to the very summit of glory and good fortune.

## C H A P. XLIII.

*Alexander puts Callisthenes to death.*  
ALEXANDER's putting Callisthenes to death, is a clear proof that many princes cannot bear with honest men who take the freedom to laugh at their follies; and that, sometimes, they may carry their resentment against them to the most extravagant lengths. Alexander put this philosopher to death, under a pretence that

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Hermidius had been engaged, by his persuasions, in a conspiracy against his person. Callisthenes was found innocent:—but notwithstanding this, he was sentenced to lose his life. An action most notoriously unjust! I have already observed, that Alexander ordered Philotas to be put to death, though he was not convicted of the crime alledged against him. The very same misfortune befell Callisthenes. Alexander put him to death, because he had disapproved of his being honored like a god. But how could he imagine that a wise man could have any great esteem for him, when he was so blinded by his good success, as to forget that he was a man, and exact divine honors from those persons whom he had formerly thought deserving of his regard, and who, till then,

then, had always respected him as a prince who was worthy of the crown he wore ? A sovereign may sometimes abandon himself to the most extravagant actions : but then the least he can do, is, to exact nothing from a worthy man, which is unbecoming his character. Alexander gave but a contemptible specimen of his sagacity, when he preferred the vile slaves, who made their court to him, to men of approved virtue and probity. It was beneath the dignity of such a gallant prince, to be offended at Callisthenes for not approving his ridiculous extravagancies. He ought not only to have pardoned him, for making a jest of his vain-glorious pretensions, but to have profited, from the just raillery of the philosopher, by repressing his pride, and behaving himself in a more rational manner. I could,

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however, have pardoned the king of Macedon, if his offence at the honest freedom of Callisthenes had gone no farther than words: and, yet, even this would have been no great credit to a magnanimous prince. But to have him instantly punished with death, was a piece of barbarity which bespeaks a character naturally prone to revenge. What renders this action still viler, is, his coloring over the violence he was guilty of with a sham conspiracy. Thus, together with his life, that precious gift of the Creator, he robbed the philosopher of what is equally valuable,---the honor and reputation of a virtuous man.

## C H A P. XLIV.

THE conduct which the king of Macedon observed toward Porus, bespoke him worthy of a crown. Nothing can be more laudable than his noble clemency to that vanquished and unfortunate monarch. But I know not which to admire most, the generosity of Alexander, or the courage and magnanimity of Porus, when he was in the power of his conqueror. The former gained a glorious conquest over himself, by giving back to his enemy, not only his liberty, but his very crown, and leaving him possessed of sufficient force to become formidable to the man who had

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conquered him. But was it not equally great, and a proof of the most elevated turn of mind, not to be dispirited by his misfortunes, but to preserve his courage in the very midst of adversity? When Alexander proposed the question, — “What treatment he thought the conqueror ought to give him?” — “Such treatment,” replied Perus, “as the present catastrophe recommends; which ought to teach you, that all human felicity is a very precarious, uncertain thing.” This answer was really worthy of a great king, and bespoke a man, who would have treated a vanquished enemy in the same manner, in which he would desire to be used himself. I am highly pleased with Alexander, upon this occasion, for suffering an enemy to prescribe laws for his conduct, and sub-  
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mitting to follow the instructions which were dictated by such an elevated soul. It affords a proof, that he himself was capable of the most exalted sentiments. All princes, in general, may learn from this passage of history, how amiable a prince may render himself by generous actions, and what an addition they will make to his glory in the eyes of the world. If the King of Macedonia had treated Porus like an enemy, every body would have had the same contempt for him, which he gave occasion for when he rejected the moderate proposals of Darius. I am very sensible that some politicians actually have condemned, and may again condemn the clemency of Alexander; because he seemed to preserve a dangerous enemy, who might have been capable of opposing the progress of his arms. But even

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policy itself will condemn their opinion. For those enemies, whom Alexander had still upon his hands, would have taken care never to surrender themselves into his power, if they had been afraid of being rigorously treated by the conqueror. But instead of this, his generous conduct must naturally have inspired them with an inclination to make a speedy submission; because they would be certain, by that means, of being treated in the most respectful manner, and received as favorably as they could desire. We must therefore acknowledge that this conduct of the king of Macedon merits the highest eulogies.

C H A P. XLV.

*The singular question which Alexander proposed to Porus.*

WHEN Alexander had conquered Porus, he asked him, "What phrenzy had seized him, that he should rashly venture to try the fortune of war against such a prince as himself, when he well knew both the force and the success of his arms?" This question doth not please me at all. Did it become a king to make a wonder of it, that other sovereigns should take up arms in their own defence? Or was it not indulging the most extravagant ideas of his own importance, to per-

suade himself that nobody could have the presumption to resist him ? How ungenerous was the hope, that his enemy would endeavor to save his life by the most scandalous submission, and lessen his character in the world to procure a favorable reception from the conqueror ! Is there, in fact, a greater piece of meanness, than for a sovereign tamely to surrender himself into the hands of his enemy, with a view to preserve his life, rather than manfully expose his person in the defence of his crown. If Alexander had judged of others by himself, he would not have proposed such a question. We cannot doubt that, in a similar case, he would have spilt the last drop of his blood in his own defence. And, indeed, he ought to have done so; excepting only the case in which he should have found it

it necessary to surrender himself a prisoner to the conqueror for the preservation of his kingdom. I cannot conceive, then, why the king of Macedon should be so surprised at the conduct of Porus. He ought rather to have respected his courage, his great love for his people, and his ambition to equal the hero against whom he fought. But the true spring of Alexander's unreasonable surprize was his thinking himself invincible. It must, indeed, be acknowledged, that he had made considerable conquests. But fortune might easily have turned her back upon him, and gone over to the side of his enemies. He was, therefore, in the wrong to despise them. His only business was to endeavor to conquer them, and put himself in such

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a condition as to have no reason to be any longer afraid of them.

But it is not improbable that Alexander might ask the question out of a bravado, to shew a fearless contempt of his enemies, and display his superiority over all the rest of his fellow-kings. He hath given us too many instances of his vanity, to render it in the least unlikely, that this was his motive in the case before us. Pride and self-sufficiency were an essential part of his character. But be it how it will, it is certain, that his asking such a question, was not at all to his honor. He gave Porus sufficient room to despise him, and an occasion to return him an answer, which was as sensible and noble as the words of Alexander were contemptible. "Since you desire," said Porus, "to know it, I will tell you with the

“ freedom which you yourself have  
“ given me the liberty to take, by ask-  
“ ing me the question. Know, then,  
“ that I did not believe that there  
“ was a more valiant man in the  
“ world than myself; because I was  
“ acquainted with my own strength,  
“ but had never proved your's. The  
“ event of this day's combat hath  
“ taught me, that I must yield to you  
“ the superiority: but I think it no  
“ small honor to hold the place next  
“ to Alexander.”

## C H A P. XLVI.

*Alexander leaps into the city of the Oxydracæ.*

WHEN Alexander was besieging the capital of the Oxydracæ, he was the first man who scaled the walls, and had the resolution to leap down into the city all alone. There the enemy assaulted him with the utmost fury: but he gallantly defended himself till his soldiers, when he was upon the point of being overpowered by numbers, rushed in to his relief. I must acknowledge that this action of our hero greatly pleases me, though in some respects it deserves to be censured. The circumstance which affords me pleasure, is to find such amazing

ing courage and intrepidity in a fellow-mortal. But on the other hand, as I have already observed, it is highly imprudent in a king to expose his person without an absolute necessity. This rule may be applied to the case before us. Alexander should have left the trouble of storming the city to his officers and soldiers. His behavior on this occasion might have been justly admired in another person, as an extraordinary proof of valor: but it was abundantly too venturesome for a great king. It was very happy for Alexander that he was not taken prisoner. But how easily might he have fallen into the hands of his enemies? Then, all his hopes of glory must have vanished for ever. Nor would his captivity itself have been any honor to him; because every body might have said,

that Alexander richly deserved such a misfortune, for stooping to perform the office of a soldier, instead of that of a king. It would have been acting more in character as a great commander, not to have forgotten his high station upon this occasion, but to have made a proper difference between the duties of a general and a soldier. A great king should never labor to display his courage to the world by exposing himself in such a rash manner. The strongest proof he can give us of his undaunted firmness and superiority of genius, is to be constantly master of his own conduct, and preserve a steady undisturbed presence of mind. We may see, by these reflections, that this instance of Alexander's intrepidity may be applauded and censured at the same time.

C H A P. XLVII.

*The conduct of Alexander after he was wounded in the city of the Oxydracæ.*

WHEN Alexander had received a dangerous wound in the city of the Oxydracæ, his officers and soldiers earnestly conjured him to take care of his health. He attended to what they said, but his courage would not permit him to waste much of his time about the cure, but presently engaged him in fresh designs, and urged him on to continue his exploits. It was a striking proof of Alexander's greatness of mind, to be less attentive to the preservation of his life, than to the reduction of his enemies, and the enlargement of his conquests.

quests. It is true, indeed, that he ought to have followed the advice of his officers ; because his life was the foundation on which the safety of his whole kingdom depended, and his death could not fail to draw after it the destruction of his new-raised empire, as was afterwards sufficiently proved by the event. I cannot say, therefore, that, in this case, Alexander acted the part of a prudent prince : but, at the same time, I cannot help being pleased to find in a man, and above all in a sovereign, such a noble and elevated turn of mind, as to esteem it glorious to sacrifice even life itself, for the advantage of his people, and the enlargement of his own glory. This instance may convince us, that the king of Macedon had a constant flow of sentiments which were worthy of his exalted station, and that

that neither danger, nor the approach of death itself, could ever banish them from his soul.

## C H A P. XLVIII.

*Alexander's enterprize on the ocean.*

THE enterprize of Alexander upon the ocean appears to me, in some respects, to have been a thoughtless inconsiderate adventure; but it thoroughly comports with the many proofs he hath afforded, upon other occasions, of his bold, romantic genius. It was very inconsiderate, thus to engage himself in an enterprize which was attended with no advantages, which could not fail to be very expensive and troublesome, and which only served to fatigue the

the soldiery. But the genius of Alexander was far from belying itself on this occasion. This prince was never capable of setting bounds to his enterprizes, but was always in quest of what is striking and uncommon. But I should have pardoned the king of Macedon for advancing to the ocean, if he had done it with another view than that of gratifying his curiosity. Such a motive is beneath the dignity of so great a soul. If his design had been to make new discoveries, to establish a port, or to extend the limits of navigation, we should have been highly pleased with him for undertaking a difficult enterprize, the consequences of which might have merited a grateful acknowledgement from posterity. But to march with a whole army at his heels, and expose both his men and himself

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to the most incredible hardships, merely for the pleasure of viewing an unknown sea,----this is an action at which humanity recoils. The son of Philip hath likewise discovered, in the instance before us, the profound ignorance of the age he lived in; because he was surprised, and even startled at such a natural phænomenon, as the ebbing and flowing of the sea.

Kings are at liberty to pursue any kind of enterprizes which are of service to the public. They are, moreover, obliged to it, because there are many useful enterprizes, which exceed the ability of a private person, and which the latter would never have courage enough to form. But I cannot persuade myself that any greatness of soul is to be discovered in this adventure of Alexander. It was wholly owing

owing to an excess of ambition, which nothing could ever satisfy, not excepting even the conquest of the world.

## C H A P. XLIX.

*Alexander slighted the warnings of the Chaldean soothsayers.*

THE soothsayers and diviners of Chaldea begged Alexander not to venture into Babylon, where he was threatened, by unlucky omens, with the most direful misfortunes. But the king of Macedon disdained to hearken to them, and proceeded in his march. I commend him for not being diverted from his design by their predictions. This is a proof that he was no ways inclinable to superstition, in an age when all the world,

world, and even wise men themselves were so disposed. If their predictions were ill-grounded, it would have been a mark of a very contemptible genius to have honored them with his credit. If they were true, all efforts to avoid his destiny would have been entirely fruitless. Alexander, therefore, acted the part of a sensible man in continuing his route. He could not have changed it, without discovering a tincture of cowardice. Nothing can be more unreasonable, and inconsistent, than to think of preventing what we regard as the decrees of fate. We should always be satisfied of the inutility of any efforts we can make, to oppose the mighty hand which executes them. The two following instances will confirm the justice of this reflection.

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An astrologer had foretold to Anthony de Levy, the General of Charles the Vth, that he should end his days at St. Dennis. Encouraged by this prophecy, when he entered Provence at the head of a hundred thousand men, he thought to have carried his victorious arms into the isle of France, and that dying in the neighbourhood of St. Dennis, he should be buried there by the emperors orders. But he proved to be mistaken. For he died at St. Dennis, a village in Provence, and was buried in the church of St. Dennis at Milan.

The other passage I refer to, is taken from the history of Henry the VIIth, King of England. He had been told that he should die at Jerusalem; and, relying on this prediction, he vainly promised himself that his life would

would be longer than ordinary, because there was no probability of his paying a visit to so remote a city. But one day, as he was coming out of Whitehall, he was suddenly taken so ill, that his attendants were obliged to convey him to the nearest apartment they could meet with. This room was called the Jerusalem-Chamber;—a circumstance which struck the king so much, when he heard it, that he cried out immediately,—“ he was a dead man.” And, in fact, the progress of his disorder was so rapid, that he expired before he could be remov'd elsewhere. We may see, by this, that every effort to escape the stroke of death will be useless, when the sovereign power, which determines the number of our days, hath fixed the time. Alexander acted the part of a wise man, and a

great prince, in preserving himself from such an instance of weakness.

## C H A P. L.

*The bon mot of Alexander upon reading  
a history of his own life.*

WHEN Alexander was passing the Hydaspe, he amused himself with reading the history of his own actions, which had been composed by one of his officers. Finding it full of romance, he instantly threw it into the river, telling the author—“ that Alexander had performed actions which were too noble to require the embellishments of falsehood.” These words of the king of Macedon may be considered in very different points of view.

view. They may be the language either of vanity, or modesty. In the former light, they may signify that imagination itself could not think of achievements more wonderful than he had really performed. In the latter sense, they may only intimate, that Alexander found the history of his life too much adulterated by the flattery of the author.

I cannot relish this *bon mot* of our hero, if it was spoken out of vanity. It will afford a fresh proof of the unreasonable and immoderate esteem which Alexander had for himself, and which was the principle of all the unjust actions we have related of him in the preceding chapter. The great Socrates used to say, “ That the only thing he “ knew, was, that he knew nothing at “ all.” This sentiment was a very fine

one; and every man in general would do well to imitate such a noble model. A prince, or the general of an army, to whatever height of good success he may be raised, should never be vain enough to persuade himself that he hath reached the summit of perfection. He ought, indeed, to be ambitious to attain it: but, after all, where shall we find the happy man who is not far beneath it? The utmost that Alexander could pretend to for all his great exploits, was the preventing a paltry scribbler from eclipsing his glory.

I should highly applaud what Alexander said, if it was really dictated by modesty. But there is little appearance of that. The manner in which he expressed his dislike,

“ Alexander hath performed actions

“ which

"which are too noble," &c. seems to me to be the language of vanity.

C H A P. LI.

*What Alexander said about the ear of kings.*

ALEXANDER used to say, "that a king should always have one of his ears shut in favor of the accused." This sentiment of the king of Macedon is a very fine one. It is a proof that he was more desirous of forgiving than of punishing, and that he did not think it right that the accused should be rashly delivered into the hands of justice. Such principles as these deserve to be imitated by all princes in general. Nothing should

be more precious to a sovereign than the lives of his subjects. He should think nothing more disagreeable than to sign warrants for the execution of creatures, who are formed of the same flesh and blood, who partake of the same nature as himself; and who were subjected to his superior authority by the casual difference of birth. If nature cannot help recoiling at the death of the meanest animal, how ought she to shudder at the thoughts of destroying a man? If princes would always indulge these reflections, the pernicious counsels, and the mischievous intrigues of faithless ministers, would not so frequently shed the blood of the innocent. A prince hath no cause to fear, that by his clemency, he will endanger the respect and submission which is due to him from his subjects. It is

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clemency which gains their hearts. Severity produceth fear, and of consequence it must render a man odious.

I do not mean to say that princes should never inflict punishments. The greater a prince's humanity is, the more readily will he follow the maxims of true goodness, and the more will he think himself obliged to restrain, by well-applied correction, those vices which disturb the public tranquillity. Thus, for example, to let a murderer escape unpunished, would be inconsistent both with humanity and religion, and give encouragement for the commission of fresh homicides. The same principles of nature and religion will always authorize a prince to commence a war upon just motives. If he hath four hundred thousand subjects, and should be attacked by a neighbouring power,

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he will be obliged to employ thirty thousand of them, and, if necessity requires it, even a hundred thousand, for the defence of the three hundred thousand which remain. Every one must perceive, that if he were to act otherwise, he would disobey the dictates of common sense; because to spare only a part of his people, he would expose all the rest of them to destruction. It results from what I have said, that it is the duty of a prince to be humane and clement, and that these sentiments were very commendable in Alexander; but it follows, at the same time, that we should carefully distinguish between true clemency and false clemency; because the latter will do more mischief than good.

CHAP. LII.

*What Alexander said to his soldiers, when they were unwilling to pass the Ganges.*

WHEN the Macedonians refused to pass the Ganges, Alexander thus addressed them, " Go," said he, " like ungrateful wretches as ye are, and abandon your king in the midst of a barbarous and an unknown country. He will meet with other subjects, and other soldiers, in every place where human creatures are to be found. Alexander will be feared and adored, let him shew himself where he will." After this

spirited harangue, he gave orders for the most mutinous among them to be put to death; and having thus restored the army to good order, they thought of nothing but obeying him. This manner of addressing himself to his mutinous soldiers, was worthy of a great king and a brave general. If he had been weak enough to waste his time in making long complaints of their ingratitude, or in reminding them of all his former generosity, the condescension would have been abundantly too mean for a sovereign. It would have looked as if he had endeavored to excuse himself; a step which should ever be cautiously avoided, when we are to deal with rebels. We should always speak to them in the most resolute tone, and make examples of the ringleaders.

But

But the words of the king of Macedon are so extremely fine, that I must subjoin a few reflections to distinguish what appears to me to be most striking.

The manner in which they begin,—

“ Go, like ungrateful wretches as ye  
“ are,—must have touched the hearts  
of the Macedonians in the most sensible  
manner. Though the generality of  
men are very forgetful of the favors  
they have received from their betters,  
they are notwithstanding sufficiently  
sensible of the baseness of such be-  
havior, and are never more chagrined  
than when they are taxed with ingrati-  
tude. Nothing can be more spirited  
than the following expression, “ aban-  
“ don your sovereign in a barbarous  
“ and unknown country.” Alexander  
was well acquainted with the

human

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human heart. He knew what a strong impression it would make on the minds of his soldiers, to present before them the image of their king forsaken in an unknown and barbarous land, and that they could never support the thought of leaving exposed, to every species of misfortune, a hero who had encountered so many dangers for their sakes,---who had loaded them with so many favors,---and whom they had always been used to reverence and love as their lawful king and master. What could be more cutting to his rebellious troops than those animated words?---“ Alexander will meet with subjects and soldiers in every place where human creatures are to be found.” Nothing can be more stinging than the noble disdain which is here

ex-

expressed. He disposesseth the minds of his soldiers, in the most artful manner, of the vain idea, that without them he could do nothing. But what majesty appears in the gallant turn with which he concludes his address? "Alexander will always be feared and adored, let him shew himself where he will." The noble pride with which he speaks of himself, in these words, is extremely well-timed. By thus reminding his soldiers what a great master they had the honor to serve, he makes them sensible what an abject piece of meanness it would be, if they should abandon him only to avoid a little fatigue.

From this analysis of the king of Macedon's harangue, we must acknowledge that it is really great and elevated, ---full of genius and fire,---and such as was

was worthy of a crowned head. I cannot blame Alexander for making examples of the ringleaders of the mutiny. If he had not put them to death, he would have exposed himself to all the insolence of the soldiery, and made them imagine that he only bore with them out of fear.

C H A P. LIII.

*Alexander's grief for the death of Hephaestion.*

ALEXANDER was so deeply affected at the death of Hephaestion, that he resolved, according to the account of some historians, to put his physician to death, for not being skilful enough to save the life of his favorite. The king of Macedon had a great deal of reason to be thus afflicted at the loss of a brave man, who had very largely contributed to his victories, and had rendered him the most important services. Such a lively sense of grief was an evidence of a truly excellent character. It proves that, in the person of

O Hephaestion.

Hephæstion, Alexander regretted the loss, not only of a faithful subject and a brave officer, but of a friend who was most tenderly beloved.

A prince may learn from this passage of history, that nothing can render him more amiable in the eyes of the world, than a capacity for the tender sentiments of friendship. He can never discover too much gratitude to those who have lost their lives in his service. By this means he will reap a double advantage: — he will never be in want of faithful friends, and will engage all his servants to do their utmost to merit a share in his affection. On the other hand, he cannot hope to have trusty subjects, if he neglects to take notice of those who have formerly served him with fidelity. It would be a wrong notion to imagine that princes can never meet

meet with faithful friends. They may always be sure of finding them, if they are but disposed to give them suitable encouragement.

## C H A P. LIV.

*The death of Alexander.*

ALEXANDER, at the moment of his death, still preserved the same greatness of soul which he had displayed in his life-time. He ordered his officers and soldiers to his bedside, and took his leave of them in such a manner as was perfectly suitable to the elevation of his rank. He delivered his ring to Perdiccas, and said, “ That he left his empire to the most deserving man.” I cannot determine whether

he ought to be censured or commended for such a mysterious piece of conduct. It is a case which is very difficult to be decided. If Alexander had actually named a successor, we are not certain that he would afterwards have been recognized as king, or that the kingdom of Macedon would not have been rent by such divisions as might have caused its utter ruin. On the other hand, it is very certain, that by his declaring that the most deserving man should fill his throne, he naturally furnished an occasion for intestine wars. For, upon this footing, all his generals might pretend alike to the crown, as being all of them raised to the same rank, and having all contributed their several parts to the king of Macedon's victories. But we may safely pardon Alexander for what he did. He had a

mind, without all doubt, to end his life in tranquillity, and preserve the esteem of his officers, to the very last, by not exciting amongst them any mutual jealousy or misunderstanding. Alexander hath likewise given us, in his last moments, an awful proof of the fragility of human grandeur. “ I “ am now thoroughly convinced,” said he; “ I am thoroughly convinced that “ I am not immortal.”

The result of all our reflections upon the character and the actions of Alexander is, that with a heart which was really capable of the most noble and the most elevated sentiments, the great conqueror of Asia entirely forgot himself, when those violent passions, which were the tyrants of his soul, opposed their interests and their influence to the natural movements of a

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generous and a well-disposed mind. Though he was the greatest of men, upon some occasions, he appeared, upon others, to degrade himself to a level with the very brutes. It must, however, be remarked, that such of his actions, as cast a cloud over his glory, may be attributed to the heat of youth, since he was only thirty years of age when he died.



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